TWO TRAGEDIES, Viz.

CLEOPATRA Queene of ÆGYPT.

AND

AGRIPPINA Empreſs of *Rome*.

Written by

THOMAS MAY, *Eſq;*

LONDON,
Printed for *Humphrey Moſeley*, and are to be ſold at his Shop at the *Princes Armes* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard.
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THE TRAGEDIE OF CLEOPATRA Queen of *Ægypt*.

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THOMAS MAY *Esq*;.

Luc.

quantùm impulit Argos,
Iliacasque domos facie Spartanæ nocentis
Hesperios auxit tantùm Cleopatra *furores.*

LONON,
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1654

TO THE MOST ACCOMPLISH'D S^r. *Kenelme Digby.*

S^r.



That is pleas'd you to cast an eye of favour upon these poor Plays has given me the boldnesse, not only to publish them (which I thought not to have done) but to shelter them, though most unworthy, under that name, to which for authority and approbation the richest pieces that this nation can boast, might be proud to flie. You are to learning what learning is to others a graceful ornament; and known not only able to receive, but fit to make that which we call literature; it being nothing else but rules and observations drawne at the first from such able natures as yours is; and by your daily conversation is better expressed, then wee by writing can define it. Your composition was made to justifie those old Philosophers who resembled a man to the whole world. For as in the world

All ambition do meet to make a perfect harmony; so in the largeness of your soule the severall abilities of most different Nations are conjoyned to an honourable advantage of one entire temper, where the predominancies are magnanimity, prudence, and gentlenesse. But I dare not offer to crowd into a narrow Epistle your noble Character, which will require a longer Treatise and a better pen. For the defects in these two Plays, I that have already been so much obliged to your goodnesse in other matters, cannot but despaire of your forgivenesse, which is the only thing that puts confidence into

Your most obliged and
devoted servant

Tho. May.

THE TRAGEDIE OF *CEOPATRA.*

Actus Primus.

TITIUS, PLANCUS, CANIDIUS.

TITIUS.



Hame and dishonour to the Roman name
A triumph held at Alexandria
Only to honour *Cleopatras* pride?

PL.

Ah *Marcus*, this Ægyptian Queen was made
To be the ruine of *Antonius*.

CA.

To be the pleasure of *Antonius*.

PL.

How can you jest *Canidius*, on a theame
So sad?

CA.

How *Plancus* can you prophecie
So sadly on so merry an occasion,

As is the love of Ladies?

TI.

Let *Canidius*
Have his own way, *Munatius*, tis in vain
To talk to him.

CA.

Would you could let me have
Antonius his way, upon condition
I suffer'd you to censure gravely of it,
And prophecie my ruine. But my Lords,
You were as good be merry too, and take
Your share of pleasure in th'Ægyptian Court.
You'l do no good with these perswasions.
He loves the Queen, and will do so in spite.
Of our morality.

PL.

Tis too too true,
That face of hers, that beauty in the bud
Not fully blown, in yeers of innocence
(If any yeers of hers were innocent)
Set off with no adulterisme of art,
Nor cloath'd with state and pompous Majestie,
But in a fortune clouded and distrest
A wretched prisoner in her brother's Court,
Yet then I say that charming face could move
The manly temper of wise *Julius Cæsar*.
That *Mars* in heat of all his active warre,
When he pursu'd the flying *Pompey* hither,
His sword yet reeking in *Pharsalius* slaughter
At sight of her became a doting Lover:
And could we think that our *Antonius*
A man not master of that temperance
That *Cæsar* had, could finde a strength to guard
His soul against that beauty now set off
With so much wealth and majesty?

CA.

CA.

No ſurely.
I did not think *Antonius* was an Eunuch.
Nor could I have believ'd he had been worthy
To be a ſucceſſour in *Cæſar's* power,
Unleſſe he had ſucceeded him in her.
Great *Julius* noble acts in warre and ſtate
Aſſur'd the world that he was wiſe and valiant:
But if he had not falne in love with her
I ſhould have much ſuſpected his good nature.

PL.

Nay then, *Canidius*, it ſhall be yours.

CA.

Or what indeed were greatneſſe in the world
If he that did poſſeſſe it, might not play
The wanton with it? this Ægyptian Queen
Is a ſtate-beauty, and ordain'd by fate
To be poſſeſt by them that rule the world.
Great *Pompey's* ſonne enjoy'd her firſt, and pluck'd
Her Virgin bloſſome. When that Family, *Plutarch.*
Whoſe ruine fill'd the World, was overthrown,
Great *Iulius* next came in as conquerour
To have his ſhare, and as he did in power,
Succeeded him in *Cleopatras* love.
Now our *Antonius* takes his turn, and thinks
That all the legions, all the ſwords, that came
To make his greatneſſe up when *Julius* dy'd,
Could give no greater priviledge to him
Then power to be the ſervant to this Queen.
Thus whoſoere in Rome be conquerour
His laurell wreath is *Cleopatras* love.
And to ſpeak juſtly of her, Nature teem'd
To build this woman for no meaner height.
Her ſoule is full of greatneſſe, and her wit
Has charms as many as her beauty has.
With Majeſtie beyond her ſex ſhe rules

Her ſpatious Kingdomes, and all neighbour Princes
Admire her parts. How many languages
Speaks ſhe with elegance? Embaſſadors
From th' Æthiopians, Arabs, Troglodites, *Plut.*
From th' Hebrews, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians
Have in amazement heard this learned Queen
Without the aid of an interpreter
In all their ſeverall tongues returne their anſwers;
When moſt of her dull predeceſſor Kings
Since *Ptolemeus Philadelphus* time
Scarce underſtood th' Ægyptian tongue, and ſome
Had quite forgot the Macedonian.

TI.

How well *Canidius* deſcants on this theame!

PLA.

I'll lay my life it pleaſes him; the man
Is deep in love, and pity tis he has
So great a rivall as *Antonius*.

CA.

Well uſe your wit upon me; but I doubt
If any man could ſearch your ſecret thoughts,
Tis envy, not morality that makes
You taxe his love, how gravely ere you talke.

TI.

But can *Canidius* think it ſhould be juſt
In our *Antonius* to forſake for her
His lawfull wife the good *Octavia*?

CA.

Then like a Roman let me anſwer, *Marcus*.
Is it become a care worthy of us
What woman *Antony* enjoys? have we
Time to diſpute his matrimoniall faults,
That have already ſeen the breach of all
Romes ſacred laws, by which the world was bound?
Have we endur'd our Conſuls ſtate and power
To be ſubjected by the lawleſſe arms

Of

Of private men, or Senators proscrib'd,
And can we now consider whether they
That did all this, may keep a wench or no?
It was the crime of us, and Fate it self
That *Antony* and *Cæsar* could usurpe
A power so great; beyond which we can suffer
No more worth thinking of. Nor were't to us
Any great fortune if *Antonius*
Were honest of his body.

PLA.

Have we then,
Who have been greatest Magistrates, quite lost
All shew of liberty, and now not dare
To counsell him?

CA.

A shew of liberty
When we have lost the substance, is best kept
By seeming not to understand those faults
Which we want power to mend. For mine own part
I love the person of *Antonius*;
And through his greatest looseneſſe can discern
A nature here, honester then *Cæsars*.
And if a warre do grow twixt them (as surely
Ambition would ere long finde out a cause
Although *Octavia* had not been neglected)
Rather then Rome should still obey two Lords,
Could wish that all were *Anthony's* alone.
Who would, I think, be brought more easily
Then *Cæsar*, to resigne the government.

TI.

Would I could think that either would do so.
Here comes her servant *Mardio*. *Enter* Mardio.

MAR.

Noble Lords,
The Queen by mee entreats your company
At supper with the Lord *Antonius*.

Her ſpatious Kingdomes, and all neighbour Princes
Admire her parts. How many languages
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Noble Lords,
The Queen by mee entreats your company
At supper with the Lord *Antonius*.

CA.

Matis return our humble services,
Wee 'll instantly attend her. Now my friends,
Can you a while put off austerity,
And rigid censures, to be freely merry?

TI.

It may be so. Wee'll try what wine can do. *Exeunt.*

A Feast preparing. EUPHRONIUS, GLAUCUS, CHARMIO.

EU.

Glaucus, let more of this perfume be got.

GLA.

I have enough in readinesse; or else
'Twould be too late to think on't now, the Queen
Is upon entrance.

EU.

Charmio, art thou sure
Those tapers stand just as the Queen commanded?

CHA.

Tis the same order that *Antonius*
When last he feasted here, so much admir'd;
And said 'mongst all the curiosities *Plutarch.*
That he had seen, the placing of those lights.
Did not the least affect him.

EU.

Though the Romans
In power and warlike state exceed us farre,
Yet in our Court of Ægypt they may learn
Pleasure and bravery, but art thou sure
That all things here are well?

CHA.

As exquisite
As the Queens wish would have it. Hark they come.

A-

ACHORAN *the Priest*, ANTONIUS, CLEOPATRA, CANIDIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS.

CLE.

To say, my Lord, that you are welcome hither
Were to disparage you, who have the power
To make your self so what ere you see
In Ægypt is your own.

AN.

What Ægypt holds
If I be judge, not all the world besides
Can equalize.

CLE.

Will't please you take
Your place, and these your noble Roman friends?

AN.

Father *Achoreus*, sit you next to mee.
Your holy Orders, and great age, which shews
The Gods have lov'd you well, may justly challenge
A reverence from us.

CLE.

Great *Julius Cæsar*
Did love my father well, he oft was pleas'd
At houres of leisure to conferre with him
About the nature of our Nile, of all
The mysteries of Religion, and the wonders
That Ægypt breeds.

ACH.

He had a knowing soule,
And was a master of Philosophy
As well as Warre.

AN.

How like the spangled sky
These tapers make the high-arch'd roofe to show?
While *Cleopatra* like bright *Cynthia*
In her full orbe more guilds the cheerfull night.

Shee's still at full; yet still me thinks she vexes,
And grows more fair and more majesticall.

CLE.

My Lords, you Romans, whose victorious arms
Have made you Masters of the world, possesse
Such full and high delights in Italy,
That our poor Ægypt can present no pleasure
Worth your acceptance: but let me entreat
You would be freely merry, and forgive
Your entertainment.

ANT.

'Tis an entertainment
That might invite and please the Gods. Me thinks,
Jove should descend, while *Cleopatra's* here,
Disguis'd for love, as once for fear he was,
When bold *Typhæus* scal'd the starry sky,
And all the Gods disguis'd in Ægypt lurk'd.
Love were a nobler cause then fear to bring him,
And such a love as thine.

CLE.

If I could think
That ere great *Jove* did play such feats as those,
I'de now beleeve that he were here disguis'd,
And took the noble shape of *Anthony*.

ANT.

This complement so farre transcends, it leaves
No answer for a wit so dull as mine.

A Song.

NOt hee, that knows how to acquire
But to enjoy, is blest.
Nor does our happinesse consist
In motion, but in rest.

The

The Gods passe man in blisse, because
They toile not for more height;
But can enjoy, and in their own,
Eternall rest delight.

Then, Princes, do not toile, nor care;
Enjoy what you possesse.
Which whilest you do, you equallize
The Gods in happinesse.

TI.

Minutius Plancus, I was thinking now
How *Hannibal* was charm'd at Capua,
When that delicious place had mollifi'd
His rough and cruell soul, and made him learn
The lessons of soft love, and luxury.

PLA.

There was no cause, *Marcus*, for such a thought.
For our *Antonius* in the heat of all
His active life knew how to revell well.

ANT.

Let this soft Musique cease, and louder sound.
This second course is mine, Call in *Lucilius*.

Enter LUCILIUS *with three Crowns.*

Fair *Cleopatra*, for addition *Plutarch.*
To what thou hold'st, the world-commanding Rome
Presents these Crowns, and by my hand invests
Thee, *Cleopatra* Queen of wealthy *Cyprus*,
Of Cœlosyria, and Phœnicia.
Blush not my Love, nor let Romes bounty force
Thy modesty: these Crowns from thy fair brow
Receive more lustre then they can bestow.

TI.

I think he need not greatly fear her blushing.

PLA.

No *Marcus* no; alas these petty Kingdomes
(Though too too great to be so ill bestow'd)
Are not the scope of her ambitious aymes!

CLE.

My Lord, I dare not make excuse, or plead
Unworthinesse, where once *Antonius* wisdome
Has made election to conferre his favours.

ANT.

Admire not, friends; the God-like power of Rome
Is more declar'd by what it gives away *Plutarch.*
Then what it holds. But these are still our owne
And *Cleopatra* Romes deserving friend.

CA.

I cannot choose but think how fit a state
For *Cleopatra Cyprus* Kingdome is;
And shall believe that it was ominous
That noble *Julius Caesar* after all
Those foure rich triumphs which he held at Rome
When he resolv'd with like magnificence
To build a Temple to the Goddesse *Venus*,
From whom his house derive their pedigree
Within his stately Temple, to expresse
The Image of that Goddesse, he set up
Fair *Cleopatraes* figure in the place
Supposing her to be the Queen of Love.
You know my Lord Antonius, this is true.
And Cyprus ever was fair *Venus* Ile.

AN.

'Twas well observ'd noble *Canidius*.

CA.

Fill me some wine. Health to the Cyprian Queen.

AN.

Drink it to me *Canidius*, and I thank thee.
Let it go round, my friends.

CLE.

CLE.

I ever thought
My ſelf much bound to heare *Candius*,
Since I was happy in his company.

AN.

How fit it is, no other *Cyprian* Queen,
But *Cleopatra* ſhall the Poets know,
Whoſe fancies now ſhall raiſe that Kingdome higher.
More amorous now will *Pepher* mountains ſhow,
And all thoſe flowery Meads, the Fields of love,
Ore which no windes but Weſtern ever blow.
The aire it ſelf will yield a ſweeter breath
While *Cleopatra* reignes the Cyprian Queen.

PLA.

How amorous in his language he is grown.

TI.

The times, I fear *Minutius*, will require
A rougher language ſhortly. We ſhall heare
Aſſoon as any news can come from Rome.

AN.

But long ago was I enforc'd to know
That *Cleopatra* was the Queen of love,
When firſt I met thee in Cilicia,
And down the ſilver ſtream of *Cydnus*, thou
In *Venus* ſhape cam'ſt ſayling, while the aire
Was raviſh'd with thy Muſick, and the windes
In amorous gales did kiſſe thy ſilken ſayls.
Thy maids in Graces habits did attend,
And boys, like *Cupids*, painted quivers bore,
While thouſand *Cupids* in thoſe ſtarry eyes
Stood ready drawn to wound the ſtouteſt hearts.

CLE.

You came like *Mars* himſelf in threatning arms
To ruine me, and my poor Country then.
I took that ſhape, becauſe I knew no ſtrength
No power on earth was able to reſiſt
The conquering fury of *Antonius*.

AN.

That face of thine resisted me, and did
So sweetly conquer, I was proud to yield;
And more rejoyc'd in that captivity,
Then any Roman in a triumph did. Enter Hipparchus.
How now, what news with thee?

HIP.

Letters from Rome, my Lord.

AN.

From whom?

HIP.

Geminius.

AN.

To morrow wee'll peruse them. No affairs
Of what import or height so ere, shall have
Power to disturbe the pleasures of this night.
Our theam to night is love, which oft has made
The Thunderer himself a while lay by
The weary burden of his government.
Come lead away.
'Twere fit to read them now.
None knows what gain a little time may be

AN.

You may peruse them *Titius*, lead away. *Exeunt.*

Manent TITIUS, PLANCUS.

Can no affairs of what import so ere
Break one nights pleasure? well *Antonius*,
The tottering state thou holdst, must be supported
By nobler vertues, or it cannot stand.

PLA.

Cyprus, Phœnice, Cœlosyria,
Three wealthy Kingdoms got with Roman bloud,
And our forefathers valour, given away.
As the base hire of an adulterous bed.
Was *Cyprus* conquer'd by the sober vertue
Of *Marcus Cato*, to be thus bestow'd?

TI.

TI.

This act will please yong *Cæsar*.

PLA.

'Twill displease
The Senate, *Octavius*, and *Antonius* friends.

TI.

Alas, he knows not what true friendship means,
But makes his friends his slaves, and which is worse
Slaves to his lusts and vices; could he else
Slight our advise so? men, whom Rome has seen
Wearing her highest honours, and of birth
As great as his. Unless he change his minde
I shall believe my friendship was ill plac'd,
And strive to place it better.

PLA.

This last act
Will quickly be at Rome.

TI.

They have enough
Already, noble *Plancus*, think you not
It will be censur'd that the Roman name
Was much dishonour'd by that base surprize *Dio. Cass.*
Of *Artavases* the Armenian King? *Plutarch.*
Whom through the streets of Alexandria
He led in triumph bound with golden chains
Forcing the captive King, (if all his threats
Could have enforc'd so much) prostrate t'adore
Proud *Cleopatra*, as if all his acts,
And all the honour of his armes were due
To her and not to Rome. *Calvisius* too *Plutarch.*
In Senate late accus'd him for bestowing
On *Cleopatra* that so farre renown'd
And famous Library of Pergamus,
In which there were two hundred thousand Books.
How many such wilde actions have her charms
Enforc'd his weakness to?

PLA.

PLA.

His Testament,
Which now at Rome the Vestall Virgins keep,
Of which we two are privy to the sealing,
Should it be known, would stirre all Romans hate,
Willing his bodie, though hedy'd at Rome, *Dio.*
To be interr'd at Alexandria. *Plutarch.*
But if a warre 'twixt him and *Cæsar* grow
(As needs it must, although not yet declar'd)
For *Cæsar* now is levying men and money
Through Italy, Spain, France and Germany,
Against what foe can his designe be bent
But our *Antonius*? if a warre I say
Twixt them should happen, tell me, noble *Titius*,
What should we do?

TI.

Fight for *Antonius*.

PLA.

True friend, were he himself, or were there hope,
Or possibility he could be so.
But shall our valour toile in sweat and blood
Only to gain a Roman Monarchy
For *Cleopatra*, and th'effeminate rout
Of base *Canopus*? shall her timbrels fright
Romes Capitoll, and her advanced pride
Tread on the necks of captive Senators?
Or, which is more, shall th' earths Imperiall seat *Dio.*
Remove from Rome to Ægypes swarthy sands?
For who can tell if mad *Antonius*
Have promis'd her, as *Caius Marius* once
Promis'de the Samnites, to transferre the state?

TI.

It may be so, his dotage is enough
To grant it her, her pride enough to aske it.
Minutius Plancus, in this whole discourse
Thou speak'st my very thoughts no more, here comes

Lu-

Lucilius, whither ſo faſt? *Enter* Lucilius.

LU.

My Lords,
Down to the Fort to wait upon the Conſuls,
The Roman Conſuls both, *Titus Domitius*, *Dio.*
And *Caius Soſſius* are from Rome arriv'd *Suetan.*
Here at Peluſium, what the matter is
Is not yet known.

PLA.

Wee'll go along with thee;
This now begins to look like buſineſſe, *Marrow. Exeunt.*

Actus Secundus.

ANTONIUS, SOSSIUS, DOMITIUS, CANIDIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS, VENTIDIUS.

AN.

TIs not the place, nor marble wals that make
A Senate lawfull, or decrees of power,
But convocation of the men themſelves
The ſacred order by true Magiſtrates.
Then Rome is here; here both her Conſuls are,
Here are her axes, and her faſces born,
And no ſmall number of that ſacred order
Are here aſſiſting, when the barbarous Gaules
Had taken Rome, when all the Senate fled,
And with *Camillus* their Dictator then

As *Veii* liv'd, Rome then at Veii was,
As now in Ægypt. Fathers, know the face,
Of your assembly, know your lawfull power.
Consult, decree, and act what ere may be
Happy, and prosperous for the Common-wealth.

SOS.

Whilst power of laws, whilst reverence of the Senate,
And due respect t' a Consuls dignity
Could give protection to the Consuls persons
We did maintain thy cause *Antonius*
Against proud *Cæsars* faction. Now since laws
Are put to silence, and the Senate forc'd,
The Consuls sacred priviledge infring'd
By rage and lawlesse armes, we are expell'd,
And suffer banishment to be restor'd,
And re-indeniz'd by thy conquering sword.
Now justly draw it. Fate approves thy cause,
And on thy conquest sets a glorious prize,
Greater then all thy former wars could give.
Sextus Pompeius, Marcus Lepidus
Are ruin'd both, and all competitors
Are tane away; Fortune has left but one
To share the world with thee; nor canst thou share
The world with him, his pride would barre thy right,
And *Cæsar's* glory dim *Antonius* light.
Thou canst not shine unlesse alone thou shine.
Or all the world, or nothing must be thine.

DOM.

The Consulship, that was design'd to thee, *Dio*
The Senate have revoked, and decree
'Gainst *Cleopatra* warre, but meant 'gainst thee.
What would their malice dare *Antonius*,
Had Fortune frown'd, thy Kings and Provinces
Revolted from thee, that dare now provoke
Thy growing fortunes and assisting Gods?
Their injury has made thy quarrell just.

Be ſpeedy then, and loſe no time of action:

SOS.

Cæſar is needy; his Italian ſouldiers — *Dio.*
Are apt to mutiny for want of pay, — *Plutarch.*
And might with eaſe be tempted to revolt.

CAN.

We need them not; our ſtrengths are greater farre
Then *Cæſar's* are; our præparations readier.
Nought but delay can queſtion our ſucceſſe.
Shall we decree the warre?

AN.

Stay noble Romans;
Before we publiſh a Decree, or ſhew
The reaſon our arms ſo juſtly tane;
Weigh but with me the means and ſtrength we have.
Know worthy friends it is no deſperate warre
Your valours are engag'd in; briefly thus:
Our Roman ſtrength is nineteen Legions.
Ten Kings in perſon will attend our Camp;
The Kings of Africk, Comagena, Thrace, — *Plutarch.*
Upper Cilicia, Paphlagonia,
Of Cappadocia, Pontus, Palæſtine,
Of rich Arabia, and Galatia.
Our ſtrength at Sea five hundred fighting ſhips
Well rigg'd and mann'd: our treaſuries are full;
And twenty thouſand talents to the warre
Does *Cleopatra* freely contribute.
Why ſpeak I more? the Crown of all my ſtrength,
Your loves and ſpirits are. The injuries
On which we ground our juſt and lawfull warre,
Are briefly theſe. *Cæſar* unjuſtly holds
Thoſe Provinces, and armies all, that late — *Dio.*
Belong'd to *Pompey* and to *Lepidus* — *Plutarch.*
Refuſing to divide them, or deliver
The moity which appertains to me
Though oft demanded by my friends at Rome,

And

And letters from my self: besides he levies
Both men and money ore all Italy,
Which country, as you know, by our agreement
Belongs to both, and should be held in common.

TI.

Most true.

CA.

These wrongs are past all sufferance.
Thy warre is but defensive, to regain
Thine own unjustly taken.

DOM.

The warre's just.

SOSS.

And *Cæsar* the beginner of these broyls
From whom the wrong first sprung, most justly may
Be judg'd an enemy to the peace of Rome.

AN.

If Fortune aid us in a cause so just,
And we return victorious, noble Romans,
I make a vow, and let it be recorded,
Within two moneths after the warre is ended, Dis.
I will lay down the government I hold,
And freely then resigne my power again
Unto the Senate and the people of Rome.

SOSS.

Let it be six moneths rather; for two moneths Dis.
Will be too short a time to settle it.

DOM.

Scssius speaks well, my Lord.

ANT.

Let it be so,
And all the Gods assist me as I mean
A just and true performance.

CA.

All the Gods
Preserve *Antonius* father of his Country.

OMN

OMN.

Author and Champion of our liberty.

Exeunt. manent TITIUS, PLANCUS.

TI.

Let them believe that list; for me, I think
The resignation of a power so great
Will be a temperance too great for him
Ere to expresse.

PLA.

Or if he would, he must
Aske leave of *Cleopatra*, and her pride
Will hardly grant him that.

TI.

Nor will I fight
To make her Mistris of the world and him.
Have you consider'd, noble friend of what
We lately spake?

PLA.

And am resolved *Marcus*.
The friends and followers we shall bring with us
Will make us welcome guests to *Cæsars* side.
It seems the City favours *Cæsar* much
That both the Consuls fled from Rome for fear.
Nor is our action base; the scorns and wrongs
We have endur'd at *Cleopatraes* hands *Plutarch.*
Would tempt a moyle to fury, and both sides
Stand equall yet.

TI.

Come let's away; tis time. *Dio.*

PLA.

Egypt farewell.

TI.

Farewell *Antonius*. *Exeunt.*

OMN

Si-

SELEUCUS, GLAUCUS.

SE.

How suddenly the Scene is changed here
From love and banquets to the rough alarms
And threatning noise of warre!

GLA.

The change, *Seleucus*
Is not so suddain as you speak; this storm
Has been expected long; the two great Lords
Of all the Roman world, *Antonius*
And *Cæsar* have in heart been enemies
These many yeers; and every man has wonder'd
'T has been withheld so long, considering
How much complaining has been daily made
By them, their friends, and factions 'gainst each other:
Whose cause is justest let the Gods determine.

SE.

No other justice then ambition
Makes them to draw their swords; no other cause
Then that the world cannot endure two Suns.

GLA.

The thing that troubles me, *Seleucus*, is
I hear it spoken in the Court, the Queen
Her self in person will associate
Antonius to the warre.

SE.

I hear that rumour;
But hope it is not true, how nakedly
And in what great confusion would this land
Be left! and what addition can her person
Among so many Roman Legions
Bring to *Antonius*?

GLA.

Let us enquire
The certainty; I fain would be resolv'd.

SE.

SE.

I on necessity must know, before
The Queen can go, that order may be taken
About the Fort I keep, what strength she means
To leave within it in her absence.

GLA.

True,
That reason will excuse thee for enquiring. *Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA, CANIDIUS.

CLE.

Noble *Canidius*, I'll entrust no more,
Nor use more circumstances; for I know
To whom I have referr'd my business,
And trust your wisdome.

CA.

Royall *Cleopatra*,
I am so fortify'd with reasons now } *Plutarch.*
That maugre *Sossius* and *Domitius*
With all their best perswasions, I'll prevaile
You shall not stay behinde; fear it not Madam.

CLE.

Brave Roman, wear this jewell for my sake;
And be possest of *Cleopatraes* love.
Second my suit, there lies not in my power
A thing to grant I should deny *Canidius*.

CA.

The favours, Madam, you can give, have power
T' oblige the greatest Monarchs of the World.

CLE.

Be ready, worthy friend; he'll straight be here. *Exit* Can.
None but *Canidius* has the power to work
Antonius in this action, which the rest
Will all oppose, I know; a thing on which
My state, my hopes, and fortunes all depend.

SE.

He

He muſt perſwade *Antonius* to take
Me with him to the warres; for if I ſtay
Behinde him here, I run a deſperate hazard;
For ſhould *Octavia* enterpoſe her ſelf
In this great warre (as once before ſhe did)
And make her brother, and her husband friends
Wher's *Cleopatra* then? but here he comes.

ANTONIUS, CLEOPATRA.

AN.

Sweet *Cleopatra*, I ſhould plead excuſe
For leaving thee awhile, but that the cauſe
Is of a nature ſo immenſe and high,
And brings effects of ſuch advantage home,
That thou I know art pleas'd it ſhould be ſo;
And with a patience canſt reſolve to bear
So ſmall an abſence, that my wiſh'd return
May call thee miſtris of the ſubject world.

CLE.

Cannot *Antonius* then be fortunate
If *Cleopatra* go? is there in me
So bad an *Omen?* did I think there were,
Not for the world would I deſire to bear
You company but rather die at home.

AN.

Farre are my thoughts from giving entertainment
To ſuch fond dreams. I would not venture thee.

CLE.

My life and fortunes both depend on yours.
As much in Ægypt will my danger be,
As in your army, and my torment more,
To die each houre for feare: and to remain
In ſad ſuſpence till meſſengers can bring
The news ſo farre: but if my company
Diſtaſt my Lord, I cannot wiſh his grief.

AN.

Can *Cleopatra* think her heavenly presence,
Can be distastfull, or not valued more
Then all joys else; parted from thee I think,
All places sad, all lands disconsolate,
Before this life I prize thy company,
But must not have it now, do not entreat;
I have deny'd it to my self already.
And in the Camp should be asham'd to rise
From *Cleopatraes* arms, when wars rough noise
Shakes all the world, when Kings and Senators
Are venturing lives and fortunes in my service.
Oh stay behinde! and let thy presence make
Ægypt a place, to which I would desire
If *Cæsar's* fortune conquer, to retire.

CLE.

If that should happen (which the Gods avert)
What land, alas! could comfort me, or lend
A safe retreat to vanquish'd *Antony?*
Thou would'st disdain to draw a wretched breath,
And I as much should scorn captivity.
But I had thought the Roman *Antony*
Had lov'd so great a Queen with nobler love;
Not as the pleasure of his wanton bed
Or mistris only of some looser houres,
But as a partner in his highest cares,
And one whose soul he thought were fit to share
In all his dangers, all his deeds of honour.
Without that love I should disdain the other.

AN.

Do not mistake me, noble Queen, I know
Thy brest is full of high heroike worth.

CLE.

How can you think it so, that could so long
In times of peace and pleasure recreate
Your self with me in Ægypt Court; yet now

When

When honour calls, reject my company?

AN.

I should desire it rather then my life;
But that my Roman friends are all against it.

Enter Sossius, Domitius, Canidius.

See here they come, if they agree tis done.
Now noble friends on whose oraculous counsels
And matchlesse valour my whole fate depends,
Speak what you think, should *Cleopatra* go
In person to the warre, or stay behinde?

SO.

I have delivered my opinion,
And so has my Colleague.

AN.

What thinks *Canidius*?

CA.

I think tis fit, my Lord, the Queen, whose bounty
Has brought so great assistance to the warre,
Should not be left behinde, besides her presence
Will much encourage her Ægyptian souldiers,
Of which a great part of the fleet consists. *Plutarch.*

AN.

Tis true *Canidius*.

CLE.

Let not my sex
Disparage me, for which of all those Kings
That now in person serve *Antonius*
Have more experience in affairs of weight
Then I, my Lord, which have so long been privy
To your high counsels, and in love to you
And your designes who should compare with me?

AN.

What think you friends? you heare *Canidius*.

DOM.

If you be pleas'd, I will subscribe.

SOS.

And I,
Since things go so.

CLE.

My wishes are effected.

AN.

Titius, and *Plancus* are both fled to *Cæsar*.

CAN.

You shall not need their help my Lord, at all.

AN.

Come, let's away.

CLE.

My strengths are ready all,
And wait but your command.

AN.

Spoke like *Bellona*,
Canidius, return you to your charge
And bring those sixteen Cohorts down to sea; *Plutarch*.
Meet me at Samos with them, both the Consuls
Shall go along with me. Great Father *Mars*,
And all you Gods, that from the skies behold
The Roman labours, whose propitious aid
Advanc'd my fortunes to so great an height,
Make perfect that, which you your selves begun.
This is the swords last work, the judging houre
Of Nations fates, of mine and *Cæsar's* power.
On which the stars and destinies attend,
And all the fortunes of Mankinde depend. *Exeunt*

ACHOREUS.

What dire portents sent from the wrathfull Gods?
Threaten th'astonish'd world? What plagues are those
Which in the skies prodigious face I read?
Tumultuous Nature teems with monstrous births,
As if the throws would break her labouring wombe.

What ruine lesse then Chaos shall involve
The mourning face of Nature? what great fate,
What kinde of mischief is it? oh ye Gods,
Why did you adde to wretched men a care
So past their strength to bear, to let them know
By sad presages their ensuing woe?
Unknown and secret let your vengeance be,
And none foresee their following miserys
But hope as well as fear. Yee hide thy dooms,
Keep shut, oh fates, your adamantine books!
Let not the bainfull curiosity
Of humane knowledge search your secret counsels,
And read your purposes, to nourish so
A killing fear before the danger grow.

Enter SELEUCUS, GLAUCUS.

SE.
That Comet's gone.

GLA.
It mov'd directly upward,
And did not vanish till it seem'd to reach
The firmament.

ACH.
What talk you of my sonnes?

GLA.
That Comet, father, ore the Grecian Sea.

ACH.
It was a strange one both for form and greatnesse,
And bodes some mischief wheresoere it light.
The Gods avert it from our Ægypts coast.

SE.
Pisaurius Scarpus had received newes
That Italy and Rome it self are fill'd
With prodigies: an ugly Owle of late
Did fly into the house of Candidus by
Phenice-

Thence being driven away it pearch'd again
Within the Temple of the peoples *Genius*.
There, though all striv'd, it neither could be caught,
Nor driven away, but flew at leisure out.
A sacred Trophey on Mount Aventine, *Dio.*
Victories Image on the Theater *Dio.*
By suddain tempests were thrown down and broken.

GLA.

In Rome and other parts of Italy
Sudden and strangely kindled fires have done
Exceeding wastes; and we are certifi'd
That now Sicilian Ætna nourishes *Dio.*
More horrid flames then usually it does,
And farther casts his scorching entrails forth,
Blasting the fields and burning up the corn.

SE.

A two-legg'd Dragon in Etruria *Dio.*
Full fourscore foot in length was lately seen,
Which after much annoyance of the Country
It self with lightning was consum'd at last.
But these portents do threaten Italy.

ACH.

Alas, my sonne, there need no prodigies
To shew the certain losse of Italy.
For on both sides do Roman Eagles stand,
And Rome must bleed who ere be conquerour,
Besides her liberty for ever lost
When this sad field is fought: but that's not all,
What clime so farre, what region so remote,
But that the Roman fortune reaches thither?
All nations share in this.

GLA.

What hast thou got
By all thy conquest Rome, by all the bloud
Which thy ambition through the world has shed,
But rais'd a power, which now thou canst not rule,

Nourish'd a Lion to devoure thy self?

SE.

Would none but Roman bloud might quench the fire
Of Romes dissentions, and no land beside
Be forc'd to pay the forfeit of their pride.
With evill *Omen* did Æneas first
Transport the reliques of Troyes fatall fire
To Italy, that kindled greater there
It might at last like lightning through the world
Rend every Nation. Was it not enough,
That first your conquests strew'd the earth with slaugh-
And dy'd all Regions with their natives blouds, (ter,
But your dissentions still must tear the world?

ACHO.

I'll go within, and make an offering
To great *Osiris*. *Exit* Achoreus.

GLA.

Well may it succeed.
Ægypt will flourish if *Antonius* conquer.

SE.

If he should fall, the fury of the warre
Would light on Ægypt most, and we should rue
That ere *Antonius* lov'd this hapleſſe land.

Enter MARDIO.

Oh Gentlemen, the strongest news, that ere
Was seen in Ægypt.

GLA.

What's that *Mardio*?

MAR.

Thousands of people with astonishment
And fear beheld it: on those fruitfull plains
That Southward ly from Alexandria,
Where never rain was known to fall before, *Dio.*
It rain'd whole showers of bloud, whose colour set

A purple die upon thoſe verdant fields;
And in the clouds that horrid noiſe was heard
That meeting armies make, beating of drums.
Shrill trumpets ſound, armor againſt armor claſhing,
As if the blood that fell, dropp'd from the wounds Did.
Thoſe aëry battails made.

GLA.

This is more ſtrange
Then all the reſt: this is our own *Seleucus*.

SE.

Well Gentlemen, I'll to Peluſium,
And fortifie the town to keep our foes,
If foes be conquerours, from entring there.

GLA.

Yes, and our friends, if they be vanquiſhed,
Keep out our friends, *Seleucus*, if their preſence
May pluck a warre, and ruine on our heads.

SE.

As there's occaſion wee'll determine that.

Enter ACHOREUS.

Avert your anges, Gods, if all too late
Our prayers came not now.

GLA.

What is it father?
Your looks, I ſee, are full of ruth and wo.

ACHO.

Ah wretched Ægypt, ah unhappy land
In what haſt thou ſo ſtor'd the wrath of heaven?
The grieved God refus'd his offering
Bellowing aloud that all the Temple rung,
And from his ſacred eys the tears run down.
Would I could contradict, or not beleeve
The skill which ſureſt obſervations teach.
This ſignifies a change of government.

GLA.

What heaven is pleas'd to send, we much endure.

ACO.

True sonne; and let a wise man place his strengths
Within himself, not trust to outward aids.
That whatsoever from the Gods can come
May finde him ready to receive their doom. *Exeunt.*

Actus Tertius.

Enter PINNARIUS SCARPUS *with Souldiers.*

PIN.

'Tis not *Antonius*, worthy souldiers,
But Rome herself to whom you owe your valours.
What he could claim, you have perform'd already;
And serv'd him truly, whilst he was to you
A Generall, to Rome a Magistrate.
You are discharg'd from all obedience
You ow'd to him, by fate it self, and may
Nay, ought to follow him, whom Roman fates
Appoint your Generall, the noble *Cæsar*
Great *Julius* heir, not to his name alone
But spirit and fortunes, which have both appear'd
In this so great and finall a defeat
Given to *Antonius*. Before we knew not

To

To whom the Gods and Fortune had assign'd
Our service souldiers; now they have declar'd.
And let us follow where they please to lead.
For faith is impious striving to sustain
That side, whose fall the Gods themselves ordain.

SOL.

Cæsar, Cæsar, Cæsar.

PIN.

Your judgments guide you right; for could you think
So small a strength as ours could raise again
The desperate state of faln *Antonius*,
Under whose ruine all those legions sunk?
What madnesse were it, souldiers to preferre
A hopelesse civill warre before the weal
And peace of Rome? and desperatly provoke
The prosperous fortunes of victorious *Cæsar*?
I have already to *Cornelius Gallus* D.6.
By letter signify'd our purposes.
Who sent from *Cæsar* now is marching hither,
To joyn his strength with ours: but hark his Drum
Give notice of his comming.

Enter GALLUS.

Hail *Pinnarius*.

PIN.

All hail *Cornelius Gallus*,
Most wish'd for, an most happily arriv'd
At Parætonium.

GAL.

Victorious *Cæsar*
With love and favour greets *Pinnarius Scarpus*;
Cæsar, then whom the world acknowledges
No other power; whom Fortune now has made
Sole Lord of all.

PI.

I, and my ſouldiers
With Parætonium are at *Ceſar's* ſervice.
Whither's *Antonius* fled?

GAL.

Hither to Ægypt
With *Cleopatra*? 'Twas a victory
So ſtrangely given away, as not the like
In former times I think has ere been heard;
On which eſpecially ſo great a price
As the ſole ſway of all the world depended.
The Fleets encountred both, while with the Camps
On either ſhore ſtood to behold the fight, *Dio.*
Heer the Cæſarian, there the Antonian Fleet
With equall hopes came on, with fury equall.
And long maintain'd a ſharpe and cruell fight,
With mutuall ſlaughter, while the Oceans face,
Was forc'd to loſe his colour, and receive
A crimſon die. The ſhips *Antonius* had
Were tall, and ſlowly did like Caſtles move.
But *Ceſar's* ſmall, yet quick and active, ſtirr'd *Dio.*
On every ſide with all advantages. *Florus.*
Long fortune doubted, and bright victory *Plutarch.*
Knew not which way to lean, but kept them both
In equall ballance; till *Antonius*
Himſelf at laſt betray'd his glorious hopes.
For when his Miſtris *Cleopatra* fled, *Plutarch.*
Although a while within his manly breaſt *Dio.*
The Roman honour ſtrove 'gainſt wanton love, *Florus.*
Love got the conqueſt, and *Antonius*
Fled after her, leaving his ſouldiers there
To ſell their lives in vain, who many houres
Though he were fled, made good the navall fight.
And had *Antonius* ſtay'd, it may be fear'd
Ceſar had not prevail'd: at laſt the Fleet
Wanting their Admirall, though not without

Much

Much slaughter, fled, or yielded all to *Cæsar*.

PIN.

But what became of all his strength on land?

GAL.

Nay, there's the wonder, there's *Antonius* madnesse,
And such a madnesse as will strike amazement
To all that heare it told: after his flight
He nere return'd, though in the campe he had
Under the conduct of *Canidius*
And other Captains nineteen legions
Fresh and unfought, which might with reason hope
Had he been there, to have recover'd all.
They still remayn'd encamped, and though oft
Sollicited by *Cæsar* to revolt
Were kept from yielding, by *Canidius*
In hope of *Antony's* return. Untill
Canidius fearing his own souldiers minds — *Plutarch.*
And *Cæsar's* anger fled away by night,
They then despairing yielded all to *Cæsar*.
Who by this time I think's arriv'd in *Ægypt*,
About Pelusium.

PI.

Will you view the town?

GAL.

With all my heart, noble *Pinnarius*. — *Exeunt.*

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, THYREUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS.

CÆ.

Antonius then with *Cleopatra's* fled
To Alexandria.

AGR.

'Tis certain, *Cæsar*.

PHA.

They say the vanquish'd Queen most cunningly: *Dio.*
(Fearing it seems, to be excluded else
From her own Kingdome) fain'd her self victorious,
Landing in Ægypt with triumphant songs
Her ships all crown'd with laurell, to deceive
The credulous people: where being enter'd once
She leaves unpractis'd no strange tyranny;
And, as we hear, to win the Parthian King
Unto her side, beheaded *Artavasdes* *Dio.*
King of Armenia, and the Parthians so,
Who was her prisoner, that *Artavasdes*,
Whom *Anthony* so basely had surpris'd.

TI.

Cæsar, 'twere fit to take Pelusium
Before we march to Alexandria.

Cæ.

'Twas our intent, good *Titius*, not to leave
A town of that import behinde our backs.
Go *Proculeius*, summon it, and know
Whether the Governour will yield or no. *Exit. Proc.*

Enter Servant.

What news with thee?

SER.

Cæsar, a messenger
From *Cleopatra* craves admittance.

Cæ.

Bring him.

Enter EUPHRONIUS.

Queen *Cleopatra* to great *Cæsar* wishes
All health and victorys: and humbly proffers
Her self and all her fortunes to his service: *Dio.*
In token of which she here presents by mee

This

This Crown and Scepter.

TI.

Brave and ominous.

EUP.

Humbly entreating *Cæsar's* noble favour
To her and hers; the rest of her desires
So please it *Cæsar* to peruse the same,
This letter holds.

PLA.

I warrant a love-letter.

CÆ.

But tell me first, where is *Antonius?*

EUP.

I'll truly tell (though it may seem to some
Incredible) that great *Antonius*
A man of late in conversation
So free, and full of jollity, in a strange
Deep melancholly has retir'd himself *Plut. Strabo*
To *Pharos* Ile; where like Athenian *Timon*, *lib. 17.*
Who did professe a hatred to mankinde,
And fled all company, he lives alone;
And on the solitary shore has built
A little house to feed his frantike humour,
And imitate that *Timon's* life, whose name
He takes unto himself: no friends at all
Nor servants are admitted to his presence,
But only two, Roman *Lucilius*
And *Aristocrates* the Græcian.

CÆ.

Not *Cleopatra?* then I doubt the man
Grows weary of these worldly vanities.

AGR.

I never heard of such a change as this.
Give me the letter. I'll peruse it now *He reads.*

AGRIPPA, AGR. CÆSAR. *they retire.*

CÆS.

Here the woman writes
That for her liberty, and to confirme
The Crown of Ægypt to her self and children
To gratifie my favour she has hid *Dio.*
Within her pallace a great masse of gold. *Plutarch.*
Unknown t' *Antonius.*

AGRI.

'Tis like ennough,
For *Cleopras*'s rich, and long has been,
Besides the sacrilege she lately did
In robbing all the Temples of the Gods
About these parts.

CÆ.

I would not lose this gold,
Nor willingly let *Cleopatra* die
Before her person have adorn'd my triumph.

AGR.

That will be hard to bring to passe, and must
Be wrought with subtilty: you must not send
A threatning message back; for if you do,
All's lost, her life, her gold and all are vanish'd.
For *Cleopatra*, as in all her acts
It has appear'd, is of a wondrous spirit,
Of an ambition greater then her fortunes
Have ever been, though she so long have sway'd
A soveraignty ore half the Roman world,
Trod on the necks of humbled Kings, and rul'd
Antonius as her slave: her haughty spirit
Will never stoop so much as to a thought
Of such captivity.

CÆ.

I do not mean

To

To let her know my minde, or once suspect
If I can help it, but I have it now.
Thyreus come hither, I must now rely
Upon thy wisdome, care, and diligence
In an employment that concerns me nearly.
But I am confident ere with this fellow Dio.
To Alexandria; use to the Queen Plutarch.
Thy best and most perswasive Oratory.
Tell her I love her, and extremly dote
On her admired beauty, thou art wise
And need'st no great instructions; the successe
I do not doubt, the woman's credulous,
And thinks all men are bound to be in love
With that insharing face, if thou perceive
She will be wrought on, winne her to betray
Antonius to my hand: the way to woo her
I leave good *Thyreus* to thy eloquence
And cunning working of itspare thy reply Ap. Euph.
Bid him come hither. Commend my hearty love
To *Cleopatra*; bid her fear no ill
From me at all. What I desire from her
My freed man *Thyreus* has commission
To utter to her self. *Epaphroditus*,
Go see him well rewarded.

EPA.

Health to *Cæsar*. *Exeunt.* Epa. & Euph.

Enter PROCULEIUS.

The Governour is stout, and does resolve
To stand th'extremest hazard of the warre
Before he yield Pelusium.

Cæ.

Let him rue
His stubborn loyalty, souldiers make ready
For the assault; 'tis shame so small a towne
Should

Should ſtay our fortune in the full carreer. *Exeunt.*

ANTONIUS *diſguis'd like* TIMON, *reading.*

Here bury'd do I lie; thou gentle wave Calli-
Keep hateful man from treading Ti- machi
mons *grave.* Epigr.
Reader be gone; enquire no more of me, de Ti-
A curſe upon thee whatſoere thou be. mone.

ANT.

Good, good; oh *Timon*, Athens nere could boaſt
A wiſe philoſopher but thee. Thou knew'ſt
The nature of all men, that all were falſe;
True *Timon*, true, they are all Knaves indeed.
Thou wiſely hat'ſt that wicked thing call'd man,
Whom other forced Philoſophers admire,
And call a noble creature, and partaker
Of divine nature: they were fools, fools *Timon*,
All other Sects were fools, and I will follow
No ſect but thine; I am a Timoniſt.
That's not enough, *Timon* himſelf I am.

Enter LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

Yonder he ſits, ſee *Ariſtocrates*
How much unlike that great *Antonius*,
Whoſe perſon late ſo many legions guarded,
So many Kings attended at their Lord.

ARI.

Antonius, where? thou art deceiv'd *Lucilius*,
That's *Timons* man.

LU.

How canſt thou jeſt at this
This wofull paſſion, which alone's enough
To melt his foes and *Ceſar* into tears.

ARI.

We feed this fooliſh paſſion, to give way,

And

And keep aloof thus. I'll go to him. *Timon.*

ANT.

Ha! what art thou? be gone I say from me.
Get you to *Cæsar* man: I hate you all.

ARI.

I hate thee, *Timon*; doſt thou think 'tis love
Has brought me hither? I am come to vex thee.

ANT.

Oh welcome, what's thy name? i'ſt *Alcibiades?*

ARI.

Haſt thou forgot me?

ANT.

Doſt thou hate all men?

ARI.

Why doſt thou think me ſo unnaturall
To love a man? but may we not love women?

ANT.

Yes, they may be belov'd; provided always
That they be falſe.

ARI.

True *Timon*, wicked women
May be belov'd, becauſe they ruine men.

ANT.

Right, right; and now I better think upon't
I'll ſet no gallowſes or gibbets up
As I entended once, for men to come
And hang themſelves, I'll keep a bawdy houſe.

ARI.

A better way by farre, 'twill ruine moe,
I wonder, *Timon*, at that fooliſh plot
That I have heard, that in thy gardens once
In Athens thou did'ſt ſet up gallowſes
For men in diſcontent to hang themſelves.
How few think'ſt thou would be ſo mad to do it?
But to a wench they'll come, and then the office
That thou ſhalt have will be of more account.

For where have you a man of any fashion
That now adays turnes hangman ; but a Pandar?
Is an employment that befits a Statesman,
A thing requires good parts and gravity.

ANT.

I'de try that course; but 'tis too slow a plot.
Oh for a speedy way to kill the world!
I have done somewhat in my dayes; my wars
And bloudy battels were not made in vain.
For I was once *Antonius*, and a Roman,
As in the wars of Troy *Pythagoras*
Before that transmigration of his soul,
Had been *Euphorbus*.

AN.

Thou art like him still.

ANT.

And when I was *Triumvir* first at Rome,

AN.

That was a time indeed, then I could heare
Of those good deeds, which must be still a comfort
To your good consciences, though they be past.
When Rome was fill'd with slaughter, flow'd with bloud.
But they perchance were Knaves that were proscrib'd,
And might have done more mischief had they liv'd.

AN.

No, they were honest men; I look'd to that.

ARI.

'Twas well, and carefully.

AN.

Behold the list.
But one among the rest most comforts me,
That talking fellow *Cicero*, that us'd
To taxe the vicious times, and was forsooth
A lover of his Country.

ARI.

ARI.

Out upon him,
Then he was rightly serv'd: for is it fit
In a well govern'd state such men should live
As love their Country? had't not been for him
Catiline's plot had thriv'd.

ANT.

Tis true, I'm sure
Cæsar was on that side, he favour'd it.

ARI.

Yes, *Cæsar* understood himself; ther's hope
That this young *Cæsar* too will prove as good
A Patriot as ere his father was.

ANT.

He will do reason man: he is of nature
Cruell enough; in that proscription
It did appear; but now he'll reigne alone.

ARI.

Oh for such factions as were then a foot
To rend the state, and fill the world with slaughter.

ANT.

Oh, let me hug thee *Akibiades*.

Enter CANIDIUS, LUCILIUS.

CA.

Is that he yonder? what strange shape is that?

LU.

None talks with him but *Aristocrates*,
Who following his own way, and suiting just
With his conceit thinks to reclaim him so.

CA.

The news, that I shall bring, will make him worse,
And fright that little reason that is left
Quite from his brest.

LU.

LU.

It cannot so *Canidius*;
Perchance to hear th'extremity of all
Will cure his fit; it cannot make him worse.
For death it self were better and more noble.

CA.

How weak a thing is man that seats his hopes
In fortunes slippery, and unconstant favours,
And seeks no surer strengths to guard his soul?
Wanting a strong foundation, he is shaken
With every winde, orethrown by every storm.
And what so frequent as those storms in fortune?
Whose fairest weather never brings assurance
Of perpetuity but come what will
I'll tell him all.

LU.

Do, good *Canidius*.

ANT.

Well *Alcibiades*; I am resolv'd
I'll to the Gates again, and either conquer
Mine enemies, or take a course to starve
And kill up my own souldiers, and so be
Reveng'd on some body: One of these two
May easily be brought to passe. How think'st thou?

ARI.

Yes, yes: but lets to Court, and there consult.

Enter MARDIO.

See who comes here, now for our bawdy project.
Here is a servant I must needs preferre
Well vers'd in bawdry, Master of the art.
Come neer brave *Mardio*, come.

MAR.

My businesse
Is not to you;

ARI.

ARI.

Mark him but well, and tell me
How he would execute the place.

MAR.

My Lord,
The Queen entreats your presence at the Palace,
The grieved Queen, who in your absence pines,
Who suffers in your grief.

ARI.

Well urg'd old *Eunuch.*

ANT.

Ha! what of her? will she revolt to *Cæsar?*

MAR.

She's farre from that, my Lord.

ANT.

What i'st he says?

ARI.

He says the constitution of her body
Cannot hold out unlesse you visit her.

MAR.

The Queen shall know it, *Aristocrates.*

ARI.

Did you not say she pin'd and languish'd Sir,
And what's the difference? tell your tale your self.

ANT.

What does she say? does she not hate me man?

MAR.

Oh no my Lord, she loves you as her life.
No spite of fortune that she has endur'd,
Or can hereafter fear, grieves her so much
As does your absence and strange melancholy.

ARI.

Well *Mardio*, thou art fittest for the place.

CAN.

My Lord *Antonius?*

ANT.

AN.

Ha! no men upon us?

CA.

I come to bring thee heavy news *Antonius.*
The forces all, which thou didst leave encamp'd
At Actium, horse and foot are gone to *Cæsar.*
And all th' auxiliary Kings; no strength
At all is left thee, but what here thou hast
At Alexandria.

AN.

Ha!

LU.

This sinks into him.

CA.

It makes a deep impression in his passion.

ARI.

And may perchance expell his other fit.

AN.

All you here yet! then I have friends I see,
But tell me, can you be so mercifull
As to forgive that most unmanly fit
I have been in? oh, I am all in blushes.

CA.

My Lord, take better comfort.

AN.

Dearest friends.
I will be proof 'gainst any fortune now. *Plutarch.*
Come let's together to the Court, and there
Drown sadnesse in rich cups of Meroë wine,
And laugh at Fortunes malice, for your sight
More cheers my spirits, then her frowns can dull them.

Exeunt.

Actus

Actus Quartus.

CLEOPATRA, GLAUCUS.

GLA.

MAdam, all drugs with pain and torment kill
That kill with ſpeed. No eaſie way to death
Is wrought but by a ſlow and lingring courſe,
Where Natures ſtrength is by degrees ſubdu'd,
And yielding ſo decayes inſenſibly.
No art at all can make a drug that's quick
And gentle too. No poyſon but the Aſpe
Of all the mortall brood of Libyaes Snakes
Kils with a ſuddain, and yet eaſie death
As if brought forth to contradict our skill
By envious Nature, who diſdains frail man
Should hope to finde her ſecrets wholly out.
None but that Serpent, Madam, can effect *Plutarch.*
What you deſires of which I here have brought.

CLE.

Leave it good *Glaucus*; leave the potion too.
Tis quick, thou ſayſt.

GLA.

Yes Madam; but too painfull
And violent.

CLE.

CLE.

Well leave them both with me. *Exit* Glaucus.
Let none adventure on prosperity
But with a spirit still prepar'd to die.
Let them keep certain death still in their power
That dare be great and happy, nought but that
Frees states when they are fall'n. Well did wise
And liberall Nature on mankinde bestow
A gift so soveraigne as power to die,
An Antidote 'gainst Fortunes cruelty,
That is the deere preservative, that must
Controll the spite of Fortune, and redeem
A wofull life from lothed servitude.
One venome's gentle; tother rough and cruell.
But tis not safe to trust mine honour so,
On doubtfull props: the poysons both may fail,
Or differ farre from what vain fame reports
Their operation. Tis experience
That must confirme me. *Mardio* is return'd.

Enter Mardio *with two prisoners.*

MAR.

Here are two men, Madam, condemn'd for murder
To cruell death, and are to die to morrow.

CLE.

Come nearer both, and tell me, dare you die? *Die.*

1. PRI.

Great Queen, necessities strict law imposes *Plutarch.*
That doom upon us, in forc'd actions
Courage can have no triall.

CLE.

Dare you die
A lesse dishonorable way, to scape
The common hangman's hand, and from a Queen
Receive your death, and that an easier death?

BOTH.

BOTH.

Most willingly, great Queen; we are prepar'd.

CLE.

Give them their lots, *Mardia*; the shortest lot
Is to die first.

2 PRI.

That lot is mine.

CLE.

The Aspe shall be thy fate: now Aspe confirme
What fame reports of thee; stay thou thy draught
Till he be dead: feel'st thou no pain?

PRI.

A faintnesse seizes me, and I would sleep.

MAR.

How gently he lies down? and scarcely strives
Against his death at all.

CLE.

I think he's dead
Already. Sure he feels but little pain.
I am confirm'd.

MAR.

He's dead and stiffe already.

CLE.

Wee'll try no more, as for thy draught of poyson
Thus we discharge thee of it, and from death
Doom'd by the law our royall pardon frees thee.
Publish it *Mardia*.

PRI.

The Gods preserve
Royall and gracious *Cleopatra*'s life. *Exeunt.*

CLE.

I am resolv'd; nought but the Libyan Aspe
Shall be renown'd for *Cleopatras* death.
Thou precious worme, that canst redeem alone
The losse of honour at a rate so easie,
That kill'st as gently as the hand of age,

And

And art miscall'd a plague of Africa,
Since thou alone mak'st barren Afrike envy'd,
By other lands, though fruitfull, wanting thee.
Who crosse the Seas, and hence at highest price
Transport the Aspe as choicest Merchandise.
On thee I trust, one gentle touch of thine
Can free this life from lothed servitude,
From *Cæsar*'s triumph, the base peoples mocks,
Proud *Livias* scorn, and mad *Octavias* spight.
But why are all my thoughts turn'd to despair?
Why think I now of death? me thinks my *Genius*
Checks this cold fear, and Fortune chiding tels me
I am ungratefull to distrust her now.
My race of life and glory is not run,
Nor *Cleopatras* fortunes yet arriv'd
At that great height that must eternize her,
And fix her glorious name aboue the stars,
I long to hear what answer *Cæsar* sends.
I do not know his temper, but he's young;
And why should I despair? are *Cupid*'s fires
Extinguish'd quite? are all his arrows spent?
Or is this beauty, that can boast the conquest
Of *Julius Cæsar*, and great *Antony*,
So waned now, it cannot move the temper
Of one, whom youth makes fit for *Cupid*'s conquest?

Enter EUPHRONIUS, THYREUS.

EUP.

Madam, your gifts were more graciously receiv'd,
And *Cæsar* with a smiling brow return'd
All seeming love and friendship; he has sent
His free'dman *Thyreus* to attend your highnesse,
And to impart his counsels to your state.

CL

CLE.

He's welcome to us. What's great *Cæsar's* will.

Exit Euphro.

THY.

Cæsar's best wishes, royall *Cleopatra*,
None but your fairest self can ratifie.
No power on earth can give what *Cæsar* wants
But you, great Queen. For lo; your Majesty
Give credit to poor *Thyreus* though the meanest
Of all the servants that attend on *Cæsar*,
There's none about him is more neer in trust
To whom he's pleased to impart his thoughts,
And secret wishes: nothing but your love
Can crown his happinesse.

CLE.

We are no subject
For *Cæsar's* mocks though in our worst of fortune.

THY.

You are the Queen of Fortune, and still hold
A lasting Scepter ore that fickle Goddesse
(Fickle to others, to you true and constant)
Your radiant light lends that blinde Goddesse eyes,
And guides her to your service, making all
Actions, nay losses steps to greater honour.
The late defeat at Actium, which your errour
Perchance miscals a losse, was Fortunes labour
To make you greater, and remove your brightnesse
Which was ill plac'd (as Diamonds coursly set)
From old *Antonius* to yong *Cæsar's* love,
A fitter sphere for those fair eys to shine in.

CLE.

Without these courtings, *Thyreus*, if great *Cæsar*
Please to embrace our friendship, we and Ægypt
Shall do him faithfull service.

THY.

Mighty Queen,

If my rude ſpeech have err'd, I humbly beg
That you would pleaſe to think it zeal in me
To do my maſter ſervice, and ſuch ſervice
As he eſteems the beſt, to gain your love,
I oft have heard him, (let your Majeſty
Not be offended with that truth I utter)
Raviſh'd with fame of your perfections,
And noble ſpirit; call *Antonius* happy,
Whom fortune brought to Ægypt, to behold
That Queen, whom he ſo much deſir'd to ſee.
But when his eys beheld your portraiture
Drawn by a skilfull, and a faithfull hand;
He oft would ſay it was a likely ſeat
To hold thoſe Graces. Such perfections
Were fit for none but *Ceſar's* to admire.

CLE.

There was a *Ceſar*, lov'd me once; but I
Am not ſo proud to think it was my merit,
Though he would ſay I did deſerve farre more
Then he could utter, that great *Iulius*,
Whoſe name and actions fill'd the triple world.

THY.

Though all in him were great, yet nothing greater
Then his adopting ſo divine an heire.
This *Ceſar*, Madam, for your deareſt love,
Beſides that power and greatneſſe, which the world
Both knows and fears, brings ſuch a youth and beautie
To plead for him, as in a meane eſtate
Might move a Princeſſe love: which that your eys
may better read, I here from him preſent
His true, and moſt unflatter'd portraiture.

CLE.

The faireſt form that ere theſe eys beheld.
Where all the beſt of each beſt modell meets,
Cupia's ſweet ſmiles, lodg'd in the eye of *Mars*,
Ganymed's cheek, th' Imperiall brow of *Jove*

Where

Where love and majesty are proud to dwell.

THY.

His age, great Queen, is yet not thirty yeers.

CLE.

I nere till now saw beautie: but *Thyreus*
May we repose a confidence in thee
As our true friend? we will deserve thy love.

THY.

To do divinest *Cleopatra* service
Is all poor *Thyreus* pride: in serving you
I best discharge my dutie to my master.

CLE.

Then briefly thus; because I would not have
Any take notice of long privacie
Twixt thee and me, and instantly w'expect
Antonius here, I will devise some means
How to deserve great *Cæsar's* love, and act
What he shall thank us for: mean while stay here
With us, good *Thyreus*, for we cannot yet
Dispatch thee with that message we entend.

THY.

I will attend your highnesse.

CLE.

Till anone
Farewell, good *Thyreus*: but be neer about us.

Exit Thyreus.

What more then this could all the fates contrive?
What more then *Cæsars* love could I have wish'd
On which all power, all state, and Glories wait.
But oh the weak and fluctuating state
Of humane frailty still too much depresst
Or rais'd too much 'twixt fears and flattring hopes!
But hence base fears; a Princely confidence
Fits *Cleopatras* minde and beautie better.

Enter ANTONIUS, CANIDIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

My dearest Lord.

AN.

Ah sweetest *Cleopatra*,
In this embrace, and this Ambrosiake kisse
I am again possest of all my wealth,
Of all my fortunes. Had the angry Gods
Purpos'd to wreak their fury fully on me
They had not left my life so sweet a comfort.

CLE.

Possest of you I stand above the reach
Of Fortunes threatning, or proud *Cæsar's* power.
Nought but your grief, and melancholly had
Power to deject my spirits.

AN.

Thy true worth
Deserves a happier friend, that could bestow
Not take alone his happinesse from thee.
In thy sweet love, and these my faithfull friends
I still am happy, I have lost no friends.
All that are gone from me to *Cæsar's* side,
Ingratefull *Titius* and *Dolabrius*.
Plancus, *Silanus*, *Dellius* and *Hipparchus*,
Were Fortunes friends not mine.

CLE.

Let's in and feast,
This day we'll dedicate to mirth and freedome:
To crown your welcome hither.

AN.

Sweetly spoken.
Let not a woman teach us souldiers
To be magnanimous.

CLE.

CLE.

This feast we'll stile
The feast of fellow-dyers: for no band *Plutarch.*
No tie of friendship is so firme as that
They live in love that mean to die together. *Exeunt.*

CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, ARIUS.

CÆ.

Grave *Arius*, in thy troubled looks I read
Fear for thy native Alexandria;
But banish fear, and know thy power with *Cæsar*,
If they obey our summons, none shall die.
But though to th'utmost they resist, thy will
Shall rule our Justice.

AR.

Humble *Arius*
Is too much honour'd in great *Cæsar*'s favour.

CÆ.

We give but what we owe, a debt so great
As mine to thee can nere be overpay'd.
Great *Alexander*, whose victorious hand
Founded that City, whose eternis'd name
For ever honours it, though in great deeds
He past our glory farre, shall not exceed
Cæsar in piety: he oft would say
He ought a better being to his Master
Then to father; one meer naturall,
The other mentall, and diviner farre.
Who's that?

Enter EPAPHRODITUS *with* FERGUS.

EPA.

Fergusius the Philosopher
Condemn'd to death by you.

Cæ.

Dispatch him then.

EPA.

He craves a word with *Arius* ere he die.

ARI.

What is it brother?

FER.

Ah good *Arius*, *Plutarch.*
Wisemen, if truly wise, save wise men still.

ARI.

Most mighty *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

Arius, no more,
I know what thou desir'st; *Fergusius* lives;
That thou know'st him has sav'd thee.

FER.

Victorie,
And fame still wait on *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

Let's away
And march with speed to Alexandria.

AGR.

Cæsar, your horse are weary: 'tis not fit
Too much to toil them, for I fear a sally
From Alexandria.

Cæ.

They dare not man.

AGR.

Antonius is strong in well-provided
And skilfull horsemen; and despair of favor

(Since

(Since twice you have refus'd his propositions)
Will put another valour into him.

CE.

What conquest can *Antonius* hope for here?

AGR.

His hopes (as nere as I conjecture them)
Are to break through your troops, and goe to Sea.
For yet he has a Fleet, that may transport him
To other lands, to gather new supplyes.
But any fortune would prove higher farre
To him, then staying here, without all hope
To be shut up in a besieged town.
In my opinion let your march be slow
And gentle; that the horse may be refresh'd.
And we prevent the worst.

CE.

Let it be so. *Exeunt.*

Enter LUCILLIS, ARISTOCRATES.

LU.

How formlesse is the forme of man the soul,
How various still how different from it self?
How falsly call'd Queen of this little world?
When she's a slave, and subject not alone
Unto the bodies temperature, but all
The storms of Fortune.

ARI.

What occasion
Make thee thus offer at Philosophy?

LU.

Where hast thou liv'd thou should'st not know th' occa-
The fits and changes of *Antonius* (sion?
Are theam enough: how strange a loving soule
Is the late hater of mankinde become!

ARI.

ARI.

That is not ſtrange, he's out of breath with curſing
And now 'tis time to ſtop his mouth with kiſſing.
But what can he conceive of this ſame *Thyreus*
That holds ſuch ſecret conference with her?

LU.

He cannot chooſe but ſee it.

ARI.

Unleſſe love
Have blinded him, ſhe carries it ſo plainly.
Well, I ſhall think if there be knavery in't,
(As knavery there muſt be) that *Cleopatra*
Is not ſo ſubtle as we took her for.

LU.

He muſt be told it, if he will not ſee
Upon my life there is ſome plot of treaſon
Which yet may be diſcover'd.

ARI.

Heer they come
Let us go fetch *Antonius* if we can.

CLEOPATRA, THYREUS.

CLE.

Peluſium ſhall be rendred up to *Ceſar* *Dio.*
By our command to our Lieutenant there *Plutarch.*
Seleucus, whoſe obedience we not doubt.

THY.

Nobleſt of Queens, you make Imperiall *Ceſar*
As much a debtor to your courteſie
As he's already captive to your beauty.

CLE.

Nor do we wrong *Antonius* at all
In giving up a town which is our own.
It may be thought tis done to weaken him;

Alas,

Alas, *Antonius* is already fall'n
So low, that nothing can redeem him now
Nor make him able to contest with *Cæsar*.
He has not only lost his armies strength
But lost the strength of his own soul, and is not
That *Antony* he was when first I knew him.
I can do *Cæsar* now no greater service.
Though I shall never want a heart to do it.
But we shall quickly see th' event of things;
Antonius now is desperate, and puts
His hopes upon the fortune of one sally,
Which will be suddenly perform'd, before
That thou canst bear a message back to *Cæsar*.

ANTONIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

AN.

Hands on that *Thyreus* there, to prison with him.

THY.

To prison!

ANT.

Yes; away with him I say. *Plutarch.*

THY.

Cæsar would not have us'd your messenger
So ill.

AN.

Thou wert no Messenger to me.

CLE.

For my sake dearest Lord.

AN.

Oh for your sake?
I cry you mercy Lady, bear him hence. *Exit* Thyreus.
I had forgot that *Thyreus* was your servant.
But what strange act should he perform for you?

Is it to help you to a happier friend?

CLE.

Can you suspect it? was my truest love
So ill bestow'd? Can he, for whose dear sake
A Queen so highly born as I preferr'd
Love before fame, and fondly did neglect
All names of honour when false *Fulvia*,
And proud *Octavia* had the name of wives, *Plutarch.*
Requite me thus? ungratefull *Anthony*,
For now the fury of a wronged love
Justly provokes my speech.

ANT.

Oh *Cleopatra*,
It is not *Thyreus* but this heart of mine
That suffers now, deep wounded with the thought
Of thy unconstancie: did Fortune leave
One only comfort to my wretched state
And that a false one? for what conference
Could'st thou so oft, and in such privacie
With *Cæsar's* servant hold, if true to me?
Which with the rack I could enforce from him,
But that I scorn to do.

CLE.

You do not scorn
To wrong with base unworthy jealousies,
A faithfull heart: but if you think me false
Heer sheath your sword: make me the subject rather
Of manly rage then childish jealousie.
It is a nobler crime, and fitter farre
For you to act, easier for me to suffer.
For live suspected I nor can nor will.
The lovely Aspe, which I with care have kept
And was intended a preservative
'Gainst *Cæsar's* cruelties, I now must use
Against *Antonius* baseness a worse so

Then

Then *Cæsar* is: farewell, till death approve
That I was true, and you unjust in love.

ANT.

Stay *Cleopatra*, dearest Love, forgive me!
Let not so small a winde have power to shake
A love so grown as ours: I did not think
That thou wert false: my heart gave no consent
To what my tongue so rashly uttered.
Nor could I have out-liv'd so sad a thought.
Let *Tyrrus* be exhaust, and fancy that.

Enter CANIDIUS.

Now is the time to sally forth, my Lord,
The fo is tir'd with marching, and your horse
Are readie all, and wait the signall only.
The least delay loses the action.

ANT.

I come *Canidius*; dearest Love farewell.
Few houres will tell thee what *Antonius* is. *Exunt.*

CLE.

How timorous is guilt? how are my thoughts
Distracted sadly now? on every side
My dangers grow: for should *Antonius*
Return in safety home, and know what past
'Twixt me and *Tyrrus*, I have lost his heart,
And cannot choose but fear him: if he die
I am not confident of *Cæsar*'s love.
'Twas but a servants tongue I built upon.
'Tis best to make all sure: within there, *Eira*.

EIRA.

Madam I.

CLE.

Are all things readie in the tombe?

EIRA.

EI.

Yes, Madam ; *Cormio's* there and *Mardio*.

CLE.

Then thither will I go, if fate contrive
A future ſtate of happineſſe for me,
It is my caſtle: if my death they doom,
I am poſſeſt already of a tombe. *Exit.*

Actus Quintus.

ANTONIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

ANT.

Defeated are my troops, my fleet revolted,
The Seas and Lands are loſt; and nothing now
Is left *Antonius* but a Roman hand,
A ſword and heart to die. You trueſt ſervants,
Whoſe faith and manly conſtancie upbraids
This wicked age, and ſhall inſtruct the next,
Take from a wretched hand this legacie.
Fortune has made my will, and nought but this
Can I bequeath you. Carry it to *Ceſar*;
If he be noble, it contains enough
To make you happier then *Antonius* can.

My

My glasse of life and Empire now is run,
And from this hand expects a period.

ELI.

My Lord, take fairer hopes.

ANT.

Fie, fie, *Lamius*;
Lose not thy former merits in perswading
A man, whom once thou lov'dst to such a shame
As to preferre a loath'd captivity
Before a noble death.
Thy looks speak grief *Plu.*

Enter EROS.

Speak *Eros*, wher's the Queen?

ERO.

She's dead my Lord. *Plutarch.*
When those unhappy tydings came to her
Of your defeat, she straight shut up her self
Within her tombe, and dy'd.

ANT.

Oh *Cleopatra*,
Why have I lingred thus, that thou a woman
Should'st teach so old a souldier how to die?
Fortune, I blame not thee; I have enjoy'd
What thou could'st give, and on the envy'd top
Of thy proud wheel have long unshaken stood.
Whom Kings have serv'd, and Rome her self obey'd;
Whom all the Zones of earths diffused Globe,
That know inhabitants, have known, and fear'd.
Nor is my fall so much degenerate.
My strength no arms but Roman arms subdue, *Plutarch.*
And none, but Monarch of the world succeeds.
Glutted with life and Empire now I go
Free and undaunted to the shades below.
Here *Eros*, take this sword, perform the promise
Which thou hast made, to kill me whensoere

I should command, make no reply in words.

BR.

I will be true or die. Stand fair; your *Eros*
Will be your Usher to th'Elizian fields. *Kils himself.*

AN.

What hast thou done unfaithfull faithfull *Eros* *Dies.*
Too kindly cruell, falsly vertuous? *Plutarch.*
I'll trust no more, to be no more directed
By such examples: but we must be speedie.
The gates ere this time are set ope to *Cæsar.*
Fair *Cleopatra*, I am comming now
To dwell with thee, and ever to behold
Thy heavenly figure, where nor time nor death
Shall make divorce of our eternall loves.
Thus, thus I come to thee unfaithfull sword,
I never knew thee slow in giving death
Till this sad houre, some friendly hand lend aid,
And with another wound release my soule.

Enter MARDIO.

Where is my Lord *Antonius*? Oh sad sight
The Queen enclosed in her tombe debar'd
To take her last leave of you.

AN.

Is she living?
Tis welcome news, convey me quickly, friends, *Plutarch.*
Oh quickly thither, that I may expire. *Die.*
That breath that's left in *Cleopatra's* arms. *Exeunt.*

A.

AGRIPPA, GALLUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS, Citizens.

AGR.

Go you, *Epaphroditus*, and besiege
The Palace, to surprize *Antonius*;
You *Proculeius*, and *Cornelius Gallus*,
Go presently to *Cleopatras* tombe,
Wo her with all your art and eloquence
With all assurances of *Cæsar's* love
To leave that place, and yield her person to him.
Spare no attempts of force or policy
To draw her thence: for you the Citizens
Of Alexandria, cheer your fainting hearts,
I'll mediate in your behalf to *Cæsar*,
To spare the City.

CI.

Thanks to the most noble
And good *Agrippa*.

AGR.

Heer he comes himself.

Enter CÆSAR, ARIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS.

CÆ.

The paleneſſe of your fear declares your guile.
But that, though here ſo great, ſhall not exceed
Our clemencie, to let you know it was
Your happineſſe to be ſubdu'd by us.
Mercy ſhall rule our juſt ſeveritie.
First for your founder *Alexanders* ſake, *Plutarch.*
Next for the love of reverent *Arius* *Dio.*
Our Maſter heer: whoſe goodneſſe far out-weighs

All

All your offences and rebellions.

CIT.

Cæsar in goodnesse, as in greatnesse, bears
Equalitie with *Jove*.

Enter ACHOREUS.

ACHO.

Hail mighty *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

What's he?

ARI.

Achoreus, *Osiris* Priest,
A good and holy man.

Cæ.

We dare believe thee,
And therfore welcom him.

ACHO.

Please it great *Cæsar*,
To give *Achoreus* leave to wait on him
Into the ancient Temples of our Gods
To shew th' Ægyptian rites and mysteries,
And all the Deities that we adore.

Cæ.

Most willingly *Achoreus*, I would see *Dio.*
Gods, but not Oxen.

TI.

He has blank'd the Priest.

Cæ.

I fain would see great *Alexander's* herse *Sueton.*
The mansion once of so divine a soul
A spirit greater then the world it self,
Whom the world fear'd but could not satisfie.

ACH.

Within the vault of our Pyramides

His

His bodie yet all whole may *Cæsar* see.
And all the bodies of our *Ptolomeys*.

Cæ.

I'd see Kings only, not dead carcasses. *Suetan.*
But see, *Epaphroditus* is return'd. *Dio.*

Enter EPAPHRODITUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

Cæ.

Speak man, where is *Antonius*?

EP.

Slain, my Lord.

Cæ.

How? slain? what hand durst do it?

EPA.

His own hand.

Cæ.

That was our fear, cruell *Antonius*.
Too cruell to thy self, to Rome, and me.
How white a day have all the people lost?
How great might *Cæsar*'s happinesse have been
Had but the fates permitted me to lay
These conquering arms aside, and once again
Embrace thee, dear *Antonius*, as a friend
Thou worthy aider of my infant fortunes, *Plutarch.*
Thou brave revenger of great *Julius* death,
Witnesse these tears, though I were forc'd to warre
(Whilst thou preferring forreigne love before
Cæsar's alliance, did'st reject my kindred,
And scorn my love) I still could honour thee.
But since too cruell fate denies to me
So great an happinesse as to expresse
This love to thee alive, let thy dear ghost
Behold my Pietie, and see the hon ours

Cæsar

Cæsar will do to thy sad funerall.

LU.

Most royall *Cæsar*-like dissimulation.

ARI.

I hope how ere 'twill serve our turns *Lucius*.
Now is the fittest time.

Cæ.

What men are these?

EPAP.

Two of *Antonius* truest servants, *Cæsar*,
Who bring a letter from their dying Lord.

Cæ.

Let me peruse it well, it shall be granted.
Your lives and fortunes both are safe, and since
We ever lov'd fidelitie, you shall
If so you like, be welcome to our service,

LU.

'Tis our desire, our lives and fortunes ever
Shall do great *Cæsar* true and faithfull services
As they before did to *Antonius*.

Cæ.

Where did he die?

EPA.

In *Cleopatraes* armes
By her with ropes let up into the tombe,
After his deadly wound.

Cæ.

Is she there still?

Enter GALLUS.

Now I shall know, speak *Gallus*, what's the news?

GAL.

We come and call'd at *Cleopatraes* tombe, *Dio.*
Who from above made answer, and deny'd *Plutarch.*

To

To yield herſelf, but upon *Ceſar's* word.
When I with beſt perſuaſions ſtrove to winne her,
And held her talk awhile, whilſt *Proculius*
On tother ſide the tombe eſpy'd a place
That open ſtood, by which the Queen receiv'd
Dying *Antonius*, which he ſcaling enter'd
Behinde the Queen: but had he not been ſpeedy
She there had ſlain herſelf: a maid of hers
Spy'd *Proculeius* entring, and aloud
Cry'd out oh Queen thou art ſurpriz'd alive.
She drawing a ſhort poniard was reſtrain'd
By *Proculeius*, who both held her hand
And ſpake her fair; at laſt obtain'd ſo much
By ſtrong perſuaſions of your clemencie
He drew her thence, and got her to the Palace.
Where now ſhe is, and *Proculeius* ſtays:
But her deſire is ſtill to ſpeak with you.
Till when from us ſhe will admit no comfort.

Cæ.

We will in perſon preſently go ſee her.
Protect me *Pallas* 'gainſt falſe *Venus* charms. *Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA *in mourning.*

Known miſchiefs have their cure; but doubts have (none,
And better is deſpair then fruitleſſe hope
Mixt with a killing fear: my thoughts are now
More black and balefull then this ſad attire.
If *Ceſar* come, I do not fear his chiding
I have a certain Antidote 'gainſt that.
'Tis not his anger, but his love afflicts
My doubting ſoul, whether that love will prove
Fained or true, yet may ſtraight appear.

He's

He's not so old, nor I so ignorant
But that his actions, gestures, words, and looks
Will make his heart lie open to my view.

Enter CÆSAR, *and* EPAPHRODITUS.

CÆ.

How sweet a sorrow dwels upon that brow!
How would she look in smiling dalliance?
Oh pardon me thou powerfull God of love,
That durst presume to tempt thy Deitie.
Forgive my confidence. I now excuse
Antonius weaknesse, but stay there my heart,
My vertuous *Livia* is more fair then she,

CLE.

Hail mighty Prince, for that high name the Gods. *Dio.*
Who reft me of it, have bestow'd on thee. *Plutarch.*

CÆ.

Rise *Cleopatra*, *Cæsar*'s victory
Takes nought from you.

CLE.

Oh let me never rise
Till *Cæsar* grant my suit.

CÆ.

Good Queen stand up,
And freely speak what you desire:

CLE.

I beg
A boon but small, which *Cæsar* nere deni'd
His greatest enemies.

CÆ.

And can you think
I should deny it you? Do but expresse it,

CLE.

CLE.

That thou would'ſt kill me *Cæſar*; I have liv'd
Theſe many yeers too long: I ſhould have dy'd
When that great Worthy, that renowned *Caſſe*
Was baſely murther'd in *Romes* Capitoll.
Surviving him was my unhappineſſe,
But I have liv'd to ſee his ſtately inheritt
His ſtate and Empire, and controll the world.

CÆ.

Be cheery *Cleopatra*, feare not nothing
At *Cæſar's* hands.

CLE.

Death is no wrong at all,
I have deſerv'd it, Sir.

CÆ.

But can you think
That we, whoſe clemencie ſo many men
And ſtubborn enemies ſo oft have prov'd,
Should now at laſt be cruell to a Queen?
But we muſt chide you, that ſo long together
Have ſided with *Antonius*, and with him
Conſpir'd the wrack of Rome.

CLE.

That's ſoon excus'd.
If 'twere a crime to love *Antonius* *Dio.*
(Which I confeſſe I did, and his large favours *Plutarch.*
Truly deſerv'd it) think it was not mine
But fates own crime, that firſt allotted me
To his protection: had your ſhare of rule
In Egypt lyen, I had been *Cæſars* friend.

CÆ.

Beſides with men and money you give aid
To *Caius Caſſius* in Philippi field
Who murther'd *Cæſar* in the Capitoll.

CLE.

CLE.

Cæsar, as false as truth it self is true.
Iuda accused to *Antonius* — *Plutarch.*
For that before, but in Cilicia — *Appian.*
I quickly clear'd those causeleſſe jealouſies,
Witneſſe thou glorious ſtarre, which the great ſoule
Of noble *Iulius*, when he left the earth,
Added to heaven, how innocent I am
From any fault in that: but *Cæsar* know — *Dio.*
Againſt thy father not the act alone,
But even ſuſpition ſhall be purg'd with death.
I can no longer live.

Cæ.

What have I done?
I fear my raſhneſſe has too far betray'd — *Dio.*
My thoughts to *Cleopatra*; gentle Queen
Be comforted; expect at *Cæsar's* hand
Nothing but love and friendſhip: do not wrong
My goodneſſe with unjuſt ſuſpition
All former grievances are quite forgot.
Your port and ſtate ſhall be maintain'd at full.
Your houſhold ſervants not diminiſhed.
Epaphroditus, ſee the Queen attended
As fits her ſtate and honour; and till next
We viſit you, reſt with a full aſſurance
Of our beſt love and friendſhip.

CLE.

All the payment
That my poor fortunes can return to *Cæsar*
Is thanks and ſervice.

Cæ.

Epaphroditus.

EPAP.

Cæsar. — *they who ſpe*

CL

CLE.

Yes, whisper on; you cannot over-reach
My jealousies: no signes of love at all,
No smile, nor amorous glance, I was deceiv'd,
And meerly coosen'd by base *Tyrrus*.
But I must hide my fears, and cleer this brow
The better to effect my purposes.

EPA.

How fares your Majesty?

CLE.

Never so well
As now I am, I did not think great *Cæsar*
Had been so full of love and courtesie.

EPA.

Oh Madam, *Cæsar's* th' unexampled mirrour
Of royaltie, and does as far exceed
All petie Kings in goodnesse as in power.
And if my humblest services in ought
May give content to royall *Cleopatra*
I shall be proud to be commanded still.

CLE.

Thanks good *Epaphroditus*.
That love is true that's shew'd in misery.
But what have I forgot? I had a note
Of some particulars I meant to give
To *Cæsar's* hand and quite forgot it here.
Nor would I trust the cariage of a thing
Of so great consequence to every hand.

EPA.

Will you command my service?

CLE.

I shall rest
Indebted to your love; *Cæsar* will thank you.
It much concerns both his estate and mine.

Exit Cæsar.

Dio.

Be speedy good *Epaphroditus*, for
I long to heare his answer.

EPA.

Feare not Madam,
A quick performance, it rejoyces me
To see her look so cheerily again. *Exit Epa.*

CLE.

So now my trouble is remov'd, I come,
I come my dearest Lord *Antonius*,
Never till now thy true and faithfull love.
My much abused Lord, do not disdain
Or blush t'acknowlege *Cleopatra's* name
When teares and bloud have wash'd her spotted soul.
Were thou alive again, not all the world
Should shake my constancie, or make divorce
Twixt thee and mee: but since too late, alas,
My teares of sorrow come, I'll follow thee,
And beg thy pardon in the other world.
All crimes are there for evermore forgot.
There *Ariadne* pardons *Theseus* falshood.
Dido forgives the perjur'd Prince of Troy,
And *Troilus* repentant *Criseis*.
Though false to thee alive, I now am come
A faithfull lover of thy dust and tombe. *Exit.*

Enter AGRIPPA, GALLUS, *and two* Pysls.

GAL.

Marcus Agrippa, I have here provided
As *Cæsar* gave in charge two Libyan *Pysls*.
All Afrik yields not fitter for his purpose.

AGRI.

They look like likely ones.

GAL.

GAL.

They have been prov'd,
And have already on my Souldiers,
When they were bit by Serpents, done strange cures,
Past all belief or hope, recall'd fled life
Back to his mansion, and beyond the powers
Of Æsculapius have back'd and charm'd
The mortall venome from their dying limbs.
These two, Agrippa in their infancy
Their doubting sires to try their lawfull blinks (As Eagles try their Eaglets 'gainst the Sun)
Expos'd to mortall Serpents, and were so
Confirm'd in what they fought, the trembling Snakes
Durst not assault the Infants.

Enter CÆSAR.

AG.

Here he comes.

CÆ.

Are those the men?

GAL.

Yes, Cæsar.

CÆ.

Carry them
To Cleopatras Palace; let them wait
Neer to Epaphroditus. What's the news?
How fares the Queen?

EPA.

Never more cheery Sir,
Her looks expresse her hopes; nor in her words
Can she conceal her inward cheerfulnesse.
But one thing, Sir, she fain'd she had forgot,
Which nearly did concern both you and her;
And that in such a cause she durst not trust
A common messenger, requesting me
To give it to your hands.

CE.

She has deceiv'd thee,
And all of us; the worst that I could fear
Is come to passe: oh ruin Egyptian,
I'll follow thee with all the speed I can.
But all too late, I fear my speed will come. *Exeunt.*

Enter CLEOPATRA *crowned, attended by* GLAUCUS, MARDIO, EIRA, CHARMIO, *&c. to her the* ASP. ANTHONY's *Body brought in.*

CLE.

This is my second Coronation day;
But nobler then the first, and fuller farre
Of reall honour, and magnificence.
Nor till this pompous houre was *Cleopatra*
A perfect Queen, alas, I did not sway
A Scepter over fortune, or command
As now I do, the destinies themselves.
I wore a painted honour, a meer shadow
Of Royall state, and such a feeble Crown
As warre could threaten, treason undermine,
And every puffe of Fortune blow it off.
My state is constant now, my thoughts above
The fear of dangers or opposing foes.

MAR.

What new addition has she got of state?

GLA.

I cannot tell, nor can I guesse her meaning.

CLE.

Glaucus and *Mardio*, leave the room a while.

Exeunt Glaucus and Mardio.

Come hither Girles, I will no longer hide
My joys from you, in such secure as this.
I go to meet my dear *Anthony*.

CHAR.

CHAR.

Madam, he's dead.

CLE.

Alas, thou art deceiv'd.
He lives my *Charmio* in the other world,
And stays for me; I have been too too slack
In comming to him: that here lies dead
Was but the house that lodg'd my dearest Lord,
That earthly Mansion, this did once contain
The kindest, noblest, and the truest soule
That ever liv'd; and this our second meeting
Is farre more sweet, and full of noble love
Then when we first met in Cilicia,
When our magnificence and pomp did fill
The world with wonder and astonishment.
Why weep you girles? is it to see your Mistris
Greater then ere in Glory? if you lov'd me,
You'd weep to see great Cleopatra led
A wretched captive through the streets of Rome
Before proud *Cæsar*'s chariot, mock'd and scorned
And from a Queen become a Mistris drudge.
No, no, my girles, I will be still my self
And from this seat of state look down in scorn
On Rome, and *Cæsar*'s threats as things below me.

ALL.

Nor heer shall my attendance leave you, Madam,
I'll wait upon you to th'Elisian shades.

CHAR.

Nor will poor *Charmio* be left behinde.

CLE.

My earthly race is run, and I descend
As great a ghost as *Ilia* than *Semele*,
When her ambitious love had sought and met
The Thunderers embraces, when no Pile
Of earthly wood, but *Jove's* celestiall fire
Consum'd her beauties reliques, and sent down

Her soul from this Majestick funerall.
Farewell thou fading remnant of my Love.
When I am gone, I'll leave these earthly parts
To keep their company: never to part,
But dwell together, and dissolve together.
Come Aspe, profesie thy mansion, freely feed
On these two kils, upon whose snowy sops
The winged Cupid oft has taken stand,
And shot from thence the proudest hearts on earth.
Corruption now, and rottennesse shall seize
This once admired fabrick, and dissolve
This flesh to common elements again;
When skilfull nature, were she strictly bound
To search through all her store-house would be pos'd
To gill which piece was Cleopatra once.
Sweet Aspe, I feel thy touch, and life begins
From these cold limbs to take her gentle flight;
A slumber seizes me, farewell my girles,
Thus let the Romans finde me dead, and know
Maugre the power of Rome, and Cæsar's spleen
That Cleopatra liv'd, and di'd a Queen.

CHAR.

She's dead, and Iras too, I heare a noise.
There is no dallying now, I must be speedy,
And use the common and sure way to death.

She finds her self.

Enter

Enter CESAR, AGRIPPA, TYTIUS, DOLABELLA, GALLUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS.

CE.

We come too late, and all in vain I fear
Our care has been.

EPA.

Here lies her servant bleeding,
Not deadly speak *Charmia*, how dy'd the Queen?

CHAR.

A death that well beseem'd her royall birth. *dyes*

AGR.

See *Cæsar*, see; the mark upon her breast,
And here the fatall authour.

CE.

'Twas the Aspe.
Be speedie now, and use your utmost power *Succour.*
You skilfull *Phyſi*, call back this royall soul *Die.*
To her fair seat, and take from *Cæsar's* bounty
Above your wish: suck thou the wounded place,
And matter-thou thy strongest charms to fright
Pale death from thence, and you infernall Gods,
If ere to humane prayers you could lend
An exorable eare, 'tis *Cæsar* begs,
Cæsar, whose sword has sent to your black shades
A hundred thousand soules, and still has power
T'enlarge your Empire, begs in lieu of all
But restitution of one soul alone.

TI.

How royally she dy'd?

EA.

No conquer'd Prince,
Did ever finde a nobler way to death.

Had

Had feeble *Pothus* known so brave a course,
He had redeem'd his captive life from shame,
And not depriv'd the Conqueror of fame.

Cæ.

Is there no hope?

PSY.

She's gone past all recoverie.

Cæ.

We will no longer strive 'gainst destiny.
Though thou art dead, yet live renown'd for ever;
And let this action speak thee to the world
A fo not shaming *Cæsar's* victory.
No other Crown or Scepter after thine
Shall Ægypt honour: thou shalt be the last
Of all the raigning race of *Ptolomy*:
And all, and more then what thy lover crav'd
Will *Cæsar* grant with dead *Antonius*
In richer state then ere proud *Memphis* saw
Her Kings inter'd shall *Cleopatra* lye.
Thy dying figure cary'd in fairest stone
Shall my triumphant chariot wear, for all
To gaze and wonder at thy form and worth.
Ægypt no more a Kingdome, now a Province
Cornelius Gallus, is thy government.
And here let *Cæsar* sheath the civill sword,
Whose fatall edge these twenty years has tipp'd
The bleeding entrails of afflicted Rome.
Heer let our labours end: advance brave friends
Our prosperous Eagles home to Italy,
To reap the fruit of all our wars and toile,
And fill great Rome with conquer'd Ægypts spoils.

FINIS.

The Speakers.

Antoniani, Ægytii, Cæsarei.

Marcus Antonius. Cleopatra. Cæsar Augustus.

Marcus Titius. Eira. Marcus Agrippa.

Munatius Planeus. Charmia. Cornelius Gallus.

C. Cavidius Crassus. Acheron. Pinnarius Scarpus.

Calus Sossius. Euphronius.

Titius Domitius. Selencus. Proculeius.

Lucilius. Glaucus. Thyrsus.

Aristocrates. Mardio. Epaphroditus.

The Scene ÆGYPT.

THE TRAGEDIE OF *JULIA AGRIPPINA*;

Written by

THOMAS MAY, *Esq;*



LONDON,
Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and are to be sold at his Shop at the *Princes Armes* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1654.



The Speakers.

Claudius Cæſar.
Nero Cæſar.
Britannicus.
Seneca.
Burrhus.
Vitellius.
Pollio.
Criſpinus.
Geta.
Otho.
Montanus.
Petronius.
Pallas.
Narciſſus.
Anicetus.

Agrippina.
Octavia.
Poppæa.
Fulvia.
Acte.
Locuſta.
L.

ACTED 1628.

OCTOB. 26. 1638.

Imprimatur,

MATTH. CLAY.

MEGÆRA *ascends.*

Megæra.

THus to the Romane *Palace*, as our home
And proper mansion, is Megæra *come*
No stranger to these walls: not more in Hell
Then here, doe mischiefs, and we Furies dwell
Let the unenvy'd Gods henceforth possesse
Poore Peasants hearts, and rule in Cottages;
Let Vertue lurke among the rurall Swaines,
Whilest Vice in Romes *Imperiall Palace reignes,*
And rules those breasts, whom all the world obeys.
What though the Gods and Vertue first did raise
Rome *to that height it holds? they did but make*
An Empire large enough for us to take,
And build a strength for us to manage now,
Though Vertue made the Romane greatnesse grow:
Shee now forsakes it at the height: the Powers,
And fruits of all her diligence are ours.
But to preserve that interest, and keep high
Our hold in this commanding family,
A blacker Fury then my selfe must rise,
To fill these roofes with fresh Impieties.
Rise cruell Ghost, ascend Caligula,
That lately didst the worlds proud sceptre sway
Beyond our wish; who though an Emperour,
In wickednesse wer't greater then in power;
And cloth'd with flesh among mankind didst dwell
A Fiend more black then any was in Hell.

From those darke vaults ascend; to blast this fame,
And guilty Palace, like that poysonous aire,
Which Earth-quakes from the grounds torne entrailes breath
To fill the world with pestilence and death.
Hee comes; Hee comes: the very house begins
To shake with horrour of approching sinnes.
The night growes blacker then before; and, I
My selfe am fill'd with new Impiety.

CALIGULA'S Ghost.

Why am I raised from the vaults below?
What mischiefe can an aëry shadow doe?
What can a naked Ghost performe? In vain
Are all intents, unlesse I reign'd againe
Oboy'd by all the Romans power, and weare
That wicked body which I had before.
What then I did you know, and if your power
Could have maintain'd me longer Emperour,
I had outdone your wishes, and given birth
To such new mischiefes, as the suffring earth
Had groan'd to feele: what my intentions were
Did to the world in those black bookes appeare,
When all Romes Senate were to death design'd,
And chests of poison that I left behind,
Which since my death into the Ocean throwne,
Poison'd the waves for many leagues, and on
Poore fishes wrought that execution,
Which on mankind I ment they should have done.
What can I now performe alas?

MEGÆRA. Enough.

With thy contagious presence blast this roofe;
Infect th' Imperiall House with all the ill
That Hell and thou canst bring. Let mischiefe still
Reigne here, and keep out banish'd Piety,
Iustice, and Conscience; let no sacred ty
Of Nature, or Religious lawes restrayne.
Their Parricidall hands: all names bee vaine

Of brother, childe, or parent. let the wife
With impious rage destroy her husbands life,
The brother kill the brother, and the Sonne
Rip up his parents bowels.

GHOST.

'Twill be done.
The actors are my kindred, and like mine
Must play their parts: ambitious Agrippine,
Pursue thy cruell projects, and upon
A husband's murther raise thy Impious Sonne,
That he may play the Parricide againe,
And murder thee, that gav'st him life and reigne.
That all the world astonish'd at so high
Ingratitude and foule Impiety,
May feare the Monsters reigne, yet suffer more
Then they could feare, or ere was felt before.
Let what no foes, no furies durst conspire
To act 'gainst Rome, *nor I my selfe desire*
When I was Prince; bee curst Nero's *crimes.*
Let his dire story in succeeding times
From all earths Tyrants elfe the wonder draw,
And men almost forget Caligula.

MEGÆRA.

The Fates consent; that thunder, which wee heare
From Acheron, *confirmes the Omen there.*
Downe wicked Ghost into thy cell below,
Wee must no longer bide; the Cocks doe crow,
The twinkling starres begin to hide their heads
The day would dawne, and from Auroras *bed*
Would Titan *rise, but that he feares to see*
Such instruments of Hells impiety.
The Gods themselves forbid our longer stay,
For feare our presence should retard the day. Exeunt.

A Tragedy.

ACT. I. SCEN. I.

PALLAS, VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Pallas.

Now is the time noble *Vitellius*,
For you, and you most honour'd *Pollio*,
To make that service you have done com-
To royall *Agrippina*, briefly thus: (pleat
The two commanders o'th' Prætorian (campe
Crispinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta*
Must be displac'd, and some of neerer trust
To her designes advanced in their roome,
Or else our power will nere be full, they love
Britannicus too well, this is the thing
The Empresse wishes; let your eloquence
And wisdome further it in *Cæsar's* eare.

Vitelli.

Feare us not *Pallas*; but what successors
Have we to take their charge?

Pallas.

One must take all.

You

You may pretend the inconvenience
Of two commanders, and so take from *Cæsar*
All jealousie of the plot.

Pollio.

Who shall it be?

Pallas.

Burrhus Afranius a wife, valiant man,
Belov'd and honour'd by the souldiers.
None can except against him, and the change
Will not displease the campe: nor can his merit
Make him lesse thankfull to her, knowing well,
'Twas in her power to make it otherwise.
But the advancing of such able men
As *Seneca* and *Burrhus* will take off
All envy from the Empresse and our selves.
Then wee with praise have wrought our purposes,
And made our party strong, while *Seneca*
Shall sway the Senate, *Burrhus* rule the campe
To her designes: but I'le presume no farther
T'instruct your wisedomes, or much lesse to doubt
Your true affections to the state and honour
Of *Agrippina*, who will then have power
To make more large requitall to her friends
In which most high and happy ranke, you two
Are chiefly seated: shee acknowledges
Her selfe indebted to your eloquence
Noble *Vitellius*, who in Senate lately
You proov'd her marriage lawfull, and being Censor,
Depos'd *Silenus* from his Prætorship,
Who should have married young *Octavia*.
To you, brave *Pollio*, whose perswasions
Have beene the cause young *Nero* now enjoyes
That happy marriage, which *Silanus* lost.
But most of all shee ow'd to both your paines
In causing *Cæsar* to adopt her *Nero*.

Vitellius.

Vitellius.

'Twas hard to worke at first. *Cæsar* stuck at it,
Alledging that the *Claudian* family
Never adopted any, and besides
When *Lucius Geta* and *Crispinus Rufus*
In love they bore to young *Britannicus*
Told him that that adoption to the world
Would bee ridiculous: by president
Wee did refute it, shewing how *Tiberius*
Having a Sonne and Nephew both alive,
Adopted th' issue of *Germanicus*.

Pallas.

My Lords, 'twas nobly carryed; this designe
That now wee have in hand, though not so hard
To worke, will prove as advantageous.
Bee you with *Cæsar*; I'le goe satisfie
The Empresse of your loves.

Vitellius. Pollio.

Farewell brave *Pallas*. *Exeunt Vitel. & Pol.*

Pallas.

Farewell my Lords. Goe flattering Senatours,
Goe use your best perswasive eloquence,
Whilest I alone upon your envie rise,
Whilest I injoy in *Agrippinaes* love
The fruit of your obsequious diligence.
What though my birth be humble, and my state
But one of *Cæsar's* freed-men, though I boast not
Patritian blood, nor in my galleries
Display old ranks of note-lesse ancestours,
Or eare-cropt images, if I enjoy
What ever high Nobility can give
Respect and power: the state can witnesse it.
The Senate feare mee, and in flattery
Have su'd to *Cæsar* to conferre on mee
Prætorian and Quæstorian ornaments:
Which I at last vouchsafed to accept.

When

When my command alone has doom'd to death
The nobleſt of that order; men whoſe names
Old *Rome* has boaſted of, whoſe vertues rais'd
Her to that envi'd height that now ſhe holds.
Their murders ſtupid *Cæſar* rather choſe
To take upon himſelfe, then queſtion mee.
Let dull Patricians boaſt their aëry titles,
And count me baſe, whileſt I commend their lives,
And for the furtherance of my high intents,
Make nobleſt men my hated inſtruments.

Enter NARCISSUS.

But ha! *Narciſſus?* yes; there comes a man
That was my rivall once, whom I fear'd more
Then all the Lords of *Rome*, my fellow free'd man,
That knew our wayes of power; that not the Senate,
But *Cæſars* chamber did command the world,
And rule the fate of men: but Fortune 's turn'd,
And he not worth my regard or feare.
In maſtring him I feele my greateſt ſtrength *exit.*

Narciſſus.

Not looke upon mee! am I fall'n ſo low?
Did I in equall place with this proud man,
Nay farre above him, ſway the ſtate, and rule
Great *Cæſar's* heart, while *Meſſalina* liv'd,
And was not there content (Oh puniſhment
Of my ambitious aimes) but cauſ'd the death
Of that looſe Empreſſe to bring in th' expulſt
Aelia Petina, and inſtead of her
Have let this Tygreſſe *Agrippina* in
This dragon ſpirit to devour us all
Except proud *Pallas* her adulterer?
What unavoided dangers every way
Threaten this life? For if young *Nero* reigne,
I dye, that ſought to croſſe his mothers match:
If ere *Britannicus* do reigne, I dye
That cauſ'd his mothers death. What ſhall I doo?

Where

Where ſhall I leane for ſafety? better truſt
The innocent goodneſſe of *Britannicus*
Then *Agrippinaes* fearce and cruell nature;
Nor can I hope more goodneſſe from her ſonne.
That may give longer reſpite to my feare.
Beſides it beares the greater ſhew of juſtice,
And honeſt ſervice to my Roiall Maſter.
Since wee muſt fall, it is ſome happineſſe
To fall the honeſt way, if wee may call
That honeſty at all, or reall vertue
To which neceſſity enforces us,
And wee by fortune not election practiſe.

Enter GETA, CRISPINUS.

Here comes two freinds of young *Britannicus*.
Haile *Lucius Geta*, haile *Criſpinus Rufus*.

Geta. Narciſſus haile.

Narciſſus,
Brave *Romans* your are come
Fitly to eaſe my overburden'd breaſt
Of weighty thoughts, which I dare freely truſt
Vnto your noble eares.

Geta.

You may *Narciſſus*
Truſt truth with us.

Criſpinus.

Or any honeſt ſecret.

Geta.

What is 't you would with us?

Narciſſus.

You know my Lords,
(And I muſt needs confeſſe) I was a meanes
Of *Meſſalinaes* death; but all the Gods
Can witneſſe with mee how unwillingly
I lent a hand to that ſad action;
And but for *Cæſar's* ſafety, which I prize
Above my life and fortunes, and which then

I thought

I thought endanger'd much by her hold act,
Nought in the world could ere have moov'd mee to it.

Crispinus.

What hence would you inferre?

Narcissus.

Then Know my Lords,
How little I respect my private ends
To doe the publike service, and can loose
My selfe for *Cæsars* good: it may be thought
When the most hopefull Prince *Britannicus*
Shall weare that wreath which all the world adores,
To me it may be fatall, as a foe
Vnto his mother: but I rather wish
My selfe for ever lost, then that brave Prince
Should not succeed his father.

Geta.

How! succeed?
What feare is there of that?

Crispinus.

What power on earth,
Can barre his right, whilest wee command the campe?
I de rather see (which all the Gods avert)
Rome rent againe with civill broiles, then hee
Should loose unjustly the Imperiall throne.

Narcissus.

Y'are true and Noble friends; and here I vow
To joyne with you, and use my uttermost power
T' advance the honour of *Britannicus*.

Crispinus.

What danger threatens it?

Narcissus.

Doe you not know
To whom the Sonne of *Agrippina's* married;

Crispinus. Yes.

Narcissus.

And that honor were enough for him.

Without

Without adoption too, were his aimes private,
And that his crafty Mother did not caſt
A way for him to the ſucceſſion.

Criſpinus.

Twas ſtrangely done of *Cæſar* I confeſſe.

Narciſſus.

They make the faction ſtrong, and cunningly
Encreaſe the traine of *Nero*, and diſplace
The faithfull ſervants of *Britannicus*.
Wiſe *Seneca's* recall'd from baniſhment
By *Agrippinaes* meanes, not for the love
Shee beares his vertue; but to make him hers,
That *Seneca's* authority may gaine
The peoples love to her ambitious ſonne,
Of whoſe young yeares hee takes tuition.

Criſpinus. I think no leſſe.

Geta. Beſides to make the match
For her young *Nero* with *Octavia*.
Noble *Silanus* dy'd, who might have proov'd
A faithfull prop to *Claudius* family.

Narciſſus.

In blood that fatall marriage was begun,
I feare the Omen; *Agrippina's* feirce
And cruell nature has too much been ſeene
In this ſhort time. *Lollia Paulina*, Neece
To *Cotta Maſſalinus*, and late wife
To *Caius Cæſar*, for no other cauſe
Then aiming once at *Claudius* marriage
Is baniſh'd *Italy*; her goods are ſeiz'd,
And but five millions of Seſterces left her
Of all her great eſtate; but there the malice
Of this ſell woman ſtayes not: now wee heare
A *Tribune* is diſpach'd away, to kill
The baniſh'd Lady, and bring back her head.

Criſpinus.

Oh barbarous cruelty!

Narciſſus.

Narcissus.

Yet more I feare,
Since her *Domitius* is adopted now.
I feare shee 'll shortly aime at higher blood.

Geta.

Wee 'll guard the life of young *Britannicus.*

Narcissus.

And I 'll be vigilant for *Cæsar* 's safety.
When all her ends are wrought, his death is next.

Enter BRITANNICUS.

Geta.

Here comes the youthfull hope of *Rome* and us,

Britannicus.

Tell mee, my *friends*, am not I *Cæsar* 's sonne?

Crispinus.

My Lord, who dares to question it?

Britannicus.

I 'm sure,
I was his eldest sonne, and whileſt I liv'd
I thought that *Cæsar* had not lack'd an heire
But I at laſt have found an elder brother,
Domitius is adopted *Cæsar* 's sonne
His name is *Nero* now. I cannot tell
What is my fault.

Geta.

Excellent youth, how much
Beyond his yeeres hee apprehends his wrongs?

Crispinus.

Feare not sweet Prince; though *Agrippinus* sonne
Bee two yeere elder then your selfe, the Senate
Will never judge that an adopted Sonne
Shall in succession bee preferr'd before
The true and naturall heire.

Britannicus.

You ever lov'd mee,
Pray doe so still.

Geta.

Geta

While wee have breath, my Lord,
you ſhall command our lives.

Criſpinus

How unawares
Has feeble *Cæſar* wrought a ſnare to catch
His own unhappy life in! grow ſweet prince,
Grow up to ſtrengthen the Imperiall houſe,
And Curbe the furious malice of thy foes.

Enter NERO, PALLAS.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* haile.

Britannicus.

Haile to you
Domitius Anobarbus.

Nero.

Doe you ſcorne
My ſalutation, or not know my name?

Britannicus.

That was your fathers name; and why not yours?

Nero.

How 's that? Proud boy. *Exeunt Brit. & reliqui.*

Pallas.

Well, let them goe, my Lord.
'Twas not the braine of young *Britannicus*
That could give birth to this minurious ſcorne,
Though for his yeeres, the boy be capable.
But riper heads then his: there went his counſell
Criſpinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta*,
Who ſwell the youth with boaſting hopes, and thinke
Their power can give protection to his pride.
I'le make them ſee their errour, and perceive,
One breath of mine can blow them from their ſtrengths.
This newes I 'll beare to *Agrippina* ſtraight.
Come Prince; *Britannicus* ſhall find anon
What feeble props his pride has lean 'd upon. *Exeunt.*

Geta.

AGRIP.

AGRIPPINA, SENECA, VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Agrippina.

You are my Judges.

Seneca.

Your poore servants, Madam.

Agrippina.

Nay that must be your office; you have read
My Commentaries over, and I looke for
A faithfull censure: I am sure, my Lords,
You have both learning able to discerne,
And such integritie as will not flatter.
Speake *Seneca*; I see they looke on you:
How doe you like them?

Seneca. Royall *Agrippina*,
Such, and so good they bee, that ablest men
May boldly speake, and not offend the truth,
Nor you at all; the stile is full and Princely.

Vitellius.

Stately and absolute, beyond what ere
These eyes have seene; and *Rome*, whose majestie
Is there describ'd, in after times shall owe
For her memoriall to your learned pen,
More then to all those fading monuments
Built with the riches of the spoiled world.
When rust shall eate her brasse, when times strong hand
Shall bruise to dust her marble Palaces,
Triumphall Arches, Pillars, Obeliskes,
When *Julius* Temple, *Claudius* Aquæducts,
Agrippa's Baths, and *Pompey's* Theater,
Nay *Rome* it selfe shall not be found at all,
Historians books shall live; those strong records,
Those deathlesse monuments alone shall shew
What, and how great the *Roman* Empire was.

Pollio.

The act is Noble; not the present world

Alone

Alone shall owe to *Agrippinaes* worth
As for her gratious government it does)
But future ages shall acknowledge more
To the rich labours of her Royall pen.

Agrippina.

The wisest Princes never sought to raise
Their present state alone, but to preserve
Themselves immortall by an endlesse fame.
For memory of mee, besides these bookes,
If that our Augures faile not in their skill,
Or flatter not, that *German* Colony,
Which I of late deducted o're the *Rhine*
To *Ubium*, for evermore the name
Of *Agrippinaes* Colony shall beare.

Vitellius.

That act, though great, declares your power alone,
Your wealth and greatnesse: but these learned bookes
Expresse your wisedome, and for these you owe
Nothing at all to Fortune.

Agrippina.

Thus I meane
To spend all time which from affaires of state,
And businesse of our Empire can be spar'd.

Seneca.

Is she already turn'd our Emperour?

Agrippina.

Those wretches have too narrow soules, who thinke
That persons great and eminent in state
Can spare no time to purchase fame by writing,
But what they steale from action and imployment,
As if no mind were large enough for both.
Who was more full of action, and more fit
To rule, nay rule the world, then *Julius Cæsar*?
Yet he was of mey mind.

Seneca.

Oh strange male spirit!
Can there be found no other parallell

But

A stile so strong, naked, and beautifull,
Free from affected words, and from all glosse
Or dresse of Oratory, as in stead
Of leading others in a way to write,
It quite discourages the ablest men.
So *Hirtius* thought, and that fam'd *Cicero*,
The greatest master of *Romes* eloquence.

Agrippina.

Are those your authors then? that *Hirtius*
Was *Cæsars* servant partiall in his heart,
Or else hee flatter'd him; for *Cicero*,
They were so farre out of his tedious straine,
Hee could not censure them.

Seneca.

Yet able men
Can truly censure of another stile
Then what themselves have us'd.

Agrippina.

Hee was not able,
No, not in Oratory; had I rul'd
Rome and her Senate then, as now I doe,
Not all th' Orations that e're *Cicero*
Made in the Senate, should have sav'd one haire
Of an offendour, or condemn'd a Mouse.

Vitellius.

How confident shee is in censuring!

Seneca.

I am amaz'd: but let her have her way.
Forgive my silence noble *Cicero*;
Here thy defence is vaine; but what I spare,
The tongues of all posterity shall speake.

Enter PALLAS, *Tribune.*

Pallas.

The Tribune, Madam, is return'd and brings
Lolia Paulinas head.

Agrippina.

Let him come in.

Tribun.

Your pleasure, great *Augusta*, is perform'd.

Agrippina.

Let me peruse this face: ha! 'tis much chang'd.
Her teeth shall make me sure, they did not grow *Dia.*
The common way; I am confirm'd; 'tis thee.
Reward him *Pallas*.

Tribune.

The Gods preserve
Augusta Agrippina.

Agrippina.

O pale death,
Thou mock of beauty, and of greatnesse too:
Was this the face, that once in *Cæsar's* love
Was *Agrippinaes* rivall, and durst hope
As much 'gainst mee, as my unquestion'd power
Has wrought on her? Was this that beautie! once
That wore the riches of the world about it?
For whose attire, all lands, all seas were search'd,
All creatures rob'd? This! This was that *Paulina*,
Whom *Cajus Cæsar* serv'd, whom *Rome* ador'd
And the world feared.

Seneca.

Such a sight mee 'thinks
Should make her sadly thinke of humane frailty.

Agrippina.

Take hence the head, least in her death shee gaine
A greater conquest o're mee, then her life
Could ever doe, to make me shed a teare.
I would not wrong the justice I have done
So much as to lament it now: You know
My friends, these hands spilt dangerous
And though my nature could have pardon'd her,
Reason of state forbade it, which then told mee

Great

Great ruines have been wrought by foolish pity.

Seneca.

Would shee had such a nature! but 'tis now
Too late to give her counsell.

Pallas.

So let all
That dare contest with *Agrippina*, fall. *Enter servant.*

Servant.

Cæsar is come to visite you.

Agrippina.

Now friends,
Vitellius, *Pollio*, *Pallas* second mee.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTISTIUS.

Cæsar.

How fares my *Agrippina*?

Agrippina.

Wondrous well,
When I am blest with *Cæsars* company.

Cæsar.

That shall be oft, my love, when Rome affaires,
And publick businesse will give me leave.

Agrippina.

I would partake my selfe of those affaires,
Rather then want your presence

Pallas.

I beleeve it.

Cæsar.

Thou shalt; 'tis onely for thy dearest sake
I love my fortunes, thy sweet fellowship
Makes light the burthen of my government.

Agrippina.

To ease great *Cæsars* care, shall ever bee
The height of my desires: before you came
My heart was sad. I sent for these, my friends
T'impart the reason to them.

Cæsar.

Alone shall owe to *Agrippinas* worth
(As for her gratious government it does)
But future ages shall acknowledge more
To the rich labours of her Royall pen.

Agrippina.

The wisest Princes never sought to raise
Their present state alone, but to preserve
Themselves immortall by an endlesse fame.
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And businesse of our Empire can be spar'd.

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That persons great and eminent in state
Can spare no time to purchase fame by writing,
But what they steale from action and imployment,
As if no mind were large enough for both.
Who was more full of action, and more fit
To rule, nay rule the world, then *Julius Cæsar*?
Yet he was of my mind.

Seneca.

Oh strange male spirit!
Can there be found no other parallell

But *Julius Cæsar* to a womans minde?

Agrippina.

Yet *Julius* was too blame, hee toild too much
To get his honour, and too much debarr'd
His nature the free use of Princely pleasures.
Sure *Lucius Sylla* had an ample minde;
Tis *Syllaes* Character, that *Salust* gives him,
A free and great enjoyer of his pleasures,
Yet how industrious his actions speake,
Hee found fit time to rule the *Romane* world,
And write both Greeke and Latine Commentaries.

Seneca.

The soules of *Sylla* and of *Cæsar* both
I thinke have enter'd her.

Agrippina.

Well worthy friends,
You doe approve my way of writing then.

Seneca.

Yes gracious Madam; and because you nam'd
Great *Julius* to us, I was thinking now
That as in blood, so in your stiles of writing
There was some neerenesse.

Agrippina.

Seneca, I thanke you;
But I confesse your positive approbation
Pleas'd mee as well as that comparison.

Seneca.

Does not your Majestie esteeme his booke?

Agrippina.

Indifferent well; a good loose careless way.
I thinke directly with *Asinius Pollio*,
Had *Cæsar* liv'd, hee would have mended it;
The man had farre more in him then that shewes.

Seneca.

Yet under favour, Madam, some have thought
Those Commentaryes hardly could be mended,

Astile

A ſtile ſo ſtrong, naked, and beautifull,
Free from affected words, and from all gloſſe
Or dreſſe of Oratory, as in ſtead
Of leading others in a way to write,
It quite diſcourages the ableſt men.
So *Hirtius* thought, and that ſam'd *Cicero*,
The greateſt maſter of *Romes* eloquence.

Agrippina.

Are thoſe your authors then? that *Hirtius*
Was *Cæſars* ſervant partiall in his heart,
Or elſe hee flatter'd him; for *Cicero*,
They were ſo farre out of his tedious ſtraine,
Hee could not cenſure them.

Seneca.

Yet able men
Can truly cenſure of another ſtile
Then what themſelves have uſ'd.

Agrippina.

Hee was not able,
No, not in Oratory; had I rul'd
Rome and her Senate then, as now I doe,
Not all th' Orations that e're *Cicero*
Made in the Senate, ſhould have ſav'd one haire
Of an offendour, or condemn'd a Mouſe.

Vitellius.

How confident ſhee is in cenſuring!

Seneca.

I am amaz'd: but let her have her way.
Forgive my ſilence noble *Cicero*;
Here thy defence is vaine; but what I ſpare,
The tongues of all poſterity ſhall ſpeake.

Enter PALLAS, *Tribune.*

Pallas.

The Tribune, Madam, is return'd and brings
Lollia Paulinaes head.

Agrippina.

Let him come in.

Tribun.

Your pleasure, great *Augusta*, is perform'd.

Agrippina.

Let me peruse this face: ha! 'tis much chang'd.
Her teeth shall make me sure, they did not grow *Dio.*
The common way; I am confirm'd; 'tis shee.
Reward him *Pallas.*

Tribune.

The Gods preserve
Augusta Agrippina.

Agrippina.

O pale death,
Thou mock of beauty, and of greatnesse too:
Was this the face, that once in *Cæsar's* love
Was *Agrippinaes* rivall, and durst hope
As much 'gainst mee, as my unquestion'd power
Has wrought on her? Was this that beautie, once
That wore the riches of the world about it?
For whose attire, all lands, all seas were search'd,
All creatures rob'd? This! This was that *Paulina*,
Whom *Cajus Cæsar* serv'd, whom *Rome* ador'd
And the world feared.

Seneca.

Such a sight mee 'thinks
Should make her sadly thinke of humane frailty.

Agrippina.

Take hence the head, least in her death shee gaine
A greater conquest o're mee, then her life
Could ever doe, to make me shed a teare.
I would not wrong the justice I have done
So much as to lament it now: You know
My friends, shee had a spirit dangerous.
And though my nature could have pardon'd her,
Reason of state forbade it, which then told mee

Great

Great ruines have been wrought by foolish pity.

Seneca.

Would shee had such a nature! but 'tis now
Too late to give her counsell.

Pallas.

So let all
That dare contest with *Agrippina*, fall. *Enter servant.*

Servant.

Cæsar is come to visite you.

Agrippina.

Now friends,
Vitellius, *Pollio*, *Pallas* second mee.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTISTIUS.

Cæsar.

How fares my *Agrippina*?

Agrippina.

Wondrous well,
When I am blest with *Cæsars* company.

Cæsar.

That shall be oft, my love, when *Romes* affaires,
And publike businesse will give me leave.

Agrippina.

I would partake my selfe of those affaires,
Rather then want your presence.

Pallas.

I beleeve it.

Cæsar.

Thou shalt; 'tis onely for thy dearest sake
I love my fortunes, thy sweet fellowship
Makes light the burthen of my government.

Agrippina.

To ease great *Cæsars* care, shall ever bee
The height of my desires: before you came
My heart was sad. I sent for these my friends
T'impart the reason to them.

Cæsar.

Sad; for what?

Agrippina.

Weighing the troubles of a Princely state,
And all the dangers that still threaten it.

Cæsar.

Dangers!

Pallas.

Shee strikes upon the fittest string;
No passion reignes in him so much as feare.

Agrippina.

Wee were devising of the fittest meanes
To give your state security: you know
Your strongest guard is the Prætorian campe.

Cæsar.

Most true.

Agrippina.

That campe commanded now by two,
May be by Captaines too ambitious strife
Divided into factions, and so made
Lesse serviceable, should your safety need them.

Vitellius.

Cæsar remembers when that bold attempt
Of *Silius* was, how the Prætorian campe
Was by their generall strife in mutiny,
And had not one been chosen for that day
To rule them all, *Cæsar* had not been safe.

Pollio.

Wise men in calmes provide for stormes to come.
None knowes how dangerous the times may prove,
Though now the state be safe, and may the Gods
To *Cæsar's* honor long preserve it so.

Seneca.

What new designe is this, that all of them *aside.*
Second so readily, and I was not
Acquainted with it? If't prove mischievous,

I thanke

I thanke the Empreſſe for my ignorance.

Agrippina.

Burrhus Afranius is a worthy man,
Fit for the place, and faithfull, well-belov'd
By all the ſouldiers: ſuch a change, my Lord,
None can except againſt: Let him take all.

Seneca.

What ere her ends may bee, this propoſition
For noble *Burrhus* ſake, I muſt approve.

Cæſar.

'Tis true, my love, I make no queſtion
Of *Burrhus* worth, and fitneſſe for the place:
But what offence have *Geta* and *Criſpinus*
Been e're accus'd of? Or what juſt ſuſpitions
Are there of them?

Agrippina.

I will not be unjuſt,
To accuſe guiltleſſe men, although I price
Thy ſafety, *Cæſar*, equall to my life.
I know no crimes of note they have committed.

Vitellius.

Cæſar, it is no loſſe to them at all;
They both have plentious fortunes to retire to.

Pollio.

And in ſo neere a cauſe, who dares examine
Great *Cæſar's* counſells, or enquire the reaſon?

Agrippina.

Shall *Burrhus* have it *Cæſar*? ſpeake thy pleaſure.
Or if my care offend, I ſhall hereafter
Forbeare to meddle.

Cæſar.

No, ſweet *Agrippina*;
Since thou wilt have it ſo; goe *Pallas*, draw
The warrant ſtraight, and ſeale it in our name:
Let *Geta* and *Criſpinus* be remoov'd,
And *Burrhus* take poſſeſſion preſently.

This day, my love, the *Britane* prisoners
Sent from *Ostorius Scapula*, and late
Arriv'd at *Rome*, shall be in publike shew'd.
There thou shalt see that brave *Barbarian* Prince,
That bold *Caractacus*, whose stubborne spirit
So many yeares contemn'd the *Roman* power.
Hee now is taken.

Pollio.

'Twas a victory
Sent from the Gods to honor *Claudius* reigne.

Agrippina.

Had he been basely taken, or at first
Yeelded himselfe, as hee had got no honour,
But been forgotten in his fall, and nought
Had e're been mention'd of him but his death:
So had thy glory *Cæsar* been farre lesse.

Vitellius.

Not warre-like *Syphax* the *Numidian* King,
Stubborne *Jugurtha*, nor great *Perseus*
Ere brought to *Rome* by their captivity
More reall honour then this *Britane* Prince.

Cæsar.

Nor doe wee price our name *Brittannicus*
Fetch'd from that Iland, lesse then *Scipio*
His honour'd name of *Africanus* priz'd.

Pollio.

Thy stile, O *Cæsar*, is the greater farre
Drawne from the conquest of another world,
Which nature ment by enterposing cold
And stormy seas, to guard from Latian armes.

Vitellius.

Great *Julius Cæsar* did but only shew
That land to us, whose conquest was reserv'd
By heavens decree to honour *Claudius* name.

Agrippina.

Cæsar, let's sit together; one Tribunall

Will

Will hold us both.

Cæsar.

It shall bee so, my love,
Thou, as my selfe, shalt pardon or condemne.

ACTUS II.

POPPÆA, OTHO.

Poppæa.

MY love, deare *Otho*, faine would bid thee stay:
But danger now forbids it, for my Lord
Returnes by this time homewards from the Pallace.

Otho.

Wee must obey the times necessity
Sweetest *Poppæa*, though I part from thee.
With such a sad'nesse as will loose by all
Comparisons. and cannot bee expresst.
But by it selfe, to say that *Otho* parts
From faire *Poppæa*, is more tragicall
Then soule from body, honour from a man.

Poppæa.

I could, mee thinkes, flatter my feares, to keepe
Thee ever heere.

Otho.

And I can scorne all feares,
And dangers too, if thou command mee stay.

Poppæa.

No, goe, my Love, and warily let's meete
That wee may often meete: but why should still
Our highest bliſſe want freedome?

Otho.

'Tis, my faire one,
The envy of the Gods, who thinke the ſtate
Of men would æquall theirs, if greateſt joyes
Were eaſyeſt to obtaine, and therſore ſtill
In horrid dangers wrap their deareſt guifts,
As all the Poets ancient fables taught.
Fire-breathing Buls did guard the Colchian fleece;
A waking dragon kept the golden fruit.
But thou, *Poppæa*, in my thoughts a prize
Of greater value, and more luſtre farre
Then that which drew the bold Theſſalian forth
So farre from Greece, or made Alcmenaes ſonne
Invade th' Heſperides, art kept from mee
By ſtronger guards, the awfull Roman lawes,
Thoſe lawes reſiſt our love.

Poppæa.

Oh where was *Otho*
Then, when my virgin bloſſome was the hope
Of thouſand noble youths? hadſt thou beene ſeene
Poppæaes bed and beauties had beene thine,
And with a lawfull uncontrolled flame
Had met thy wiſh in thoſe delights, which now
Wee are inforc'd to ſteale.

Otho.

Muſt it bee ſo
For ever then?

Poppæa.

It muſt while *Rufus* lives.

Otho.

Nor can I blame bleſt *Rufus*, if hee ſtrive
To keepe that wealth, which if it lay beyond

The

The Indian *Ganges*, Scythian *Tanais*,
Or horned *Ammons* scorch'd and thirsty sands,
Would draw the Roman Monarch to forsake
His worlds Imperiall seat there to enjoy,
And think those banish'd that remain'd at Rome.
If I were *Cæsar*, and condemn'd by fate
To want *Poppæaes* love, I should bee poore.
No other deare prerogative could that
High wreath bestow, but only power to make
Thee mine without a rivall: I might then
With boldnesse take thee from *Crispinus* armes.

Poppæa.

But could that act bee lawfull?

Otho.

Canst thou doubt it?
Where two loves meete can marriage bee unlawfull?
Of which love is the soule, the very forme
That gives it being no dead outward ty,
But natures strong and inward sympathy.
Can make a marriage, which the Gods alone
Have power to breede in us, and therfore they
Have only power to ty so sweete a knot.
I am thy mate; nor did thy father, when
Hee gave that fayre hand unto another,
Ought but rebell against the Gods decree.

Poppæa.

Thou art to good an advocate, and I
Too partiall for a judge.

Otho.

Bee constant to mee
Till fortune give a bolder privilege.
And warrant to our love, of which I have
Receiv'd such faire presages, as I cannot
Despaire, meane while by stealth I must behold
Those starry eyes, and think my selfe most happy
In that, though no man know my happinesse.

Poppæa.

Poppæa.

Can men count those delights a happinesse
Which they conceale?

Otho.

Yes, those that truly love. *Enter Fulvia.*

Fulvia.

Madam, my Lord is come.

Poppæa.

Farewell deare *Otho.*

Otho.

Farewell: love guard thee till wee meete againe. *exit.*

Enter CRISPINUS, GETA.

Crispinus.

Come *Lucius* study to forget it now,
And let's bee truly merry; my *Poppæa*
Bid' *Lucius Geta* welcome, my colleague
That was, but still my friend.

Poppæa.

You are most welcome.

Geta.

Thankes faireſt *Lady.*

Poppæa.

But my Lord, what meanes
That speech of yours, that *Lucius Geta* once
Was your colleague and is not.

Crispinus.

I'l tell thee,
Great *Agrippina* has commanded *Cæsar*
To command *Pallas* to command us two.
To quit our charge and suddainly resigne
The governement of the Prætorian campe
To Burrhus hand; at which hee storms; but I
Am merryer farre, and lighter then before
Wee may live freely now, *Cæsar* has tane
A weighty burthen from my weary necke
I thanke his goodnesse.

Geta

Geta.

Thanke his sottishnesse,
Tis that has pleatured you, ah frend it needes
Must grieve all noble hearts, that can love justice,
And pity suffring innocence, to see
The harmelesse yeares of young *Britannicus*
Expos'd to all the malice of his foes,
And stupid *Cæsar* made the instrument
To ruine his owne sonne: whilest his great power
By others is abus'd against himselfe
And his posterity.

Crispinus.

I do beleive it.

Geta.

His servants all, that to himselfe were true,
Or faithfull to his sonne, are murther'd now,
Or else displac'd by her: our truth's the cause
That wee have lost our places.

Crispinus.

Tis no matter,
Wee loose no honour by our truth: and since
While wee had power, wee faithfully discharg'd
Our trust to *Cæsar*, let's no longer strive
To guard him 'gainst his will, but take his gift.
Hee gives us ease, and freedome, to retire,
And tast the sweetes of privacy, and there
Enjoy our lives free from the glorious noise,
And troubles of a Court; instead of waiting
On *Cæsar* now, on thee I will bestow
That time, my faire *Poppæa*, and attend
On thy delights; thou wilt not cast mee off
As *Cæsar* does.

Fulvia.

Shee cannot promise you
I know her heart better then you in that.

Crispinus

Crispinus.

None can describe the sweetes of countrey life
But those bleſt men that do enjoy, and taſt them.
Plaine husband men, though farre below our pitch
Of fortune plac'd, enjoy a wealth above us.
To whome the earth with true and bountious juſtice
Free from warres cares returnes an easy food.
They breath the freſh and uncorrupted aire,
And by cleare brookes enjoy untroubled ſleepes.
Their ſtate is fearleſſe, and ſecure, enrich'd
With ſeverall bleſſings, ſuch as greateſt Kings
Might in true juſtice envy, and themſelves
Would count too happy, if they truly knew them.

Geta.

Tis true, *Criſpinus*, greateſt Monarchs oft
Have in the midſt of all their carefull glories
Deſir'd ſuch lives as thoſe plaine people lead.

Criſpinus.

Let us enjoy that happineſſe then *Lucius*
The countrey ſports and recreations
And friends as innocent as wee, with whom
Wee need not feare the ſtrength of richeſt wine
In drawing out our ſecrets: but well fill'd
At ſupper time may hold a free diſcourſe
Of *Ceſar's* weakeneſſe, of the wealth and pride
Of his freed'men, how lordly *Pallas* rules;
How feirce and cruell *Agrippina* is,
What ſlaves the Roman Senate are become,
And yet next morne awake with confidence.

Poppæa.

All this, my Lord, you may diſcourſe at Rome
If you can wiſely chooſe your company.

Criſpinus.

Well ſaid *Poppæa*, thou art a woman right,
Thou lov'ſt the city well.

Geta.

I cannot blame her,
Such beauty seekes no corners, but may well
Become th' Imperiall city of the world.

Crispinus.

Come *Lucius Geta*, let's goe in and laugh
At our proud enemyes, enjoy theire malice,
And drowne our cares in rich *Falernian* wine
As ancient as *Opimius* Consulship.

Enter to them NARCISSUS.

Geta.

Here comes a man, *Crispinus*, I beleive
Is sory for this change.

Crispinus.

I thinke so *Lucius*.

Narcissus.

Haile noble *Romans*.

Crispinus.

Haile to you *Narcissus*.
How dare you venture a salute on us,
Or make a visite to such guilty men?

Narcissus.

Guilty my Lord, in what?

Crispinus.

In beeing wrong'd.
Those that are wrong'd in Court, are made offendours,

Narcissus.

I must confesse, my Lord, it was a wrong
To you and your Colleague to bee displac'd,
But you have spirits great enough to scorne
That injury, and pity him that did it,
I meane that suffer'd his proud foes to doo it
Rather against himselfe then you; the wrong
Must fall on *Cæsar*, and his hapleſse house.
Blinded by fate, and neere his fall, hee throwes
Away the best supporters of his state.

Geta.

Geta.

The thought of that as I am true, *Narciſſus*,
Afflicts mee more then mine owne loſſe can doe.

Criſpinus.

For mee, I thinke my ſelfe well free'd from trouble
Were't not for feare of poore *Britannicus*.

Narciſſus.

I doo beleeve it, noble Lords; but you
Are now diſchar'gd, and may retire with ſafety.
My part is yet to play, a part of danger,
And I will act it bravely: here I vow
By all the Gods, no feare ſhall make mee ſhrinke
Till I have once more righted *Claudius*
Againſt the luſts and treaſons of a wife.
Nor do I boaſt of *Meſſalinaes* death.
It was the times neceſſity, that made
Mee then to ſhew my power; that power perchance
Is yet as much; nor ſhall the Lordly *Pallas*,
Though ſwell'd with *Agrippinaes* luſtfull favours,
And back'd by her authority, hee thinke
Himſelfe ſole ruler in th' Imperiall houſe,
Finde that *Narciſſus* is ſo fall'n in ſpirit
But that I dare attempt as much as then.
Great *Cæſar's* ſafety is as much in danger
As then it was, his nuptiall bed as ſtain'd,
And I will dy, or take the ſame revenge,
That then was taken; all their plots and treaſons
Will I reveale to *Cæſar*, and purſue it
With ſuch a dauntleſſe conſtancy, that if
The Gods forget not to bee juſt, this day
Proud *Agrippina*, and her minion fall.
The young *Britannicus* ſhall ſtand ſecure
In his high birthright; *Meſſalinaes* ghoſt
Shall then perchance, although thee hate mee now,
Forgive the hand that cauſ'd her overthrow,

Geta.

Bravely resolu'd, *Narcissus.*

Crispinus.

You shall doe
An act that all good men shall thank you for.
Will you goe in, and taste my wine'.

Narcissus.

Not now,
I came but only to reveale my purpose
To you, whose noble wishes may befriend it,
And when occasion serves, may truly witnesse
My just intents; this hower I am expected
By *Cæsar* in his gardens; there I'll put
My life upon the hazard; every minute
May breede a change, and all delayes have danger.
For *Cæsar* upon those discoveryes
That I already have made to him, utter'd
Some words last night at supper in his wine.
Of which I feare that *Agrippina* tooke
Too great a notice; therfore speede must helpe us.
Farewell my Lords.

Ambo.

Farewell: the Gods assist thee. *Exeunt.*

OTHO.

Otho.

So rich a bondage is *Poppæas* love,
That I were base if I should wish for freedome,
Nay more, ingrate, should I desire to change
So sweete a care for quietnesse it selfe,
Should I suppose that state, which some dull soules
Call calme content, were hallfe so rich, so free
As are these pinings, this captivity.
Were there in love no cares, no sighs, no feares,
There were in love no happinesse at all.
What blisse, what wealth dare're the world bestow
On man, but cares and feares attended it?

Yet

Yet who so base, as, to bee freed from those,
Would throw away the highest blisse on earth?
Let silly shipheards, whose poore narrow soules
Not much exceede the beasts they tend and feede,
That know, like them, no farther regions
Then some few feilds, no larger bounds of pleasure
Then satisfaction of bare natures needes,
Bee still secure since they have nought to loose,
And rest content because they never knew
What cityes were, and gorgeous *Pallaces*.
Should Monarchs, who are taught to know th' extent
Of natures wealth, and what the world affords,
Forgoe their glorious fortunes, cause they want
That wretched thing, which only ignorance,
And low contempt can give, Security?
Should I forgoe my faire *Poppeaes* love
Because some cares, some feares, and sighs attend it:
When every smile of hers can recompence
A thousand such? were too much poorenesse in mee
Had I nere seene those starry eyes of hers
More happlesse farre my ignorance had beene.
I hed, like wretched men, that are borne blinde,
Nere knowne there was a Sunne to guild the world.
But to injoy her love without all feares,
Without all rivalls, were a blisse beyond
Mortality: the Gods would envy mee.
Shee's now another mans: that may bee thought
The greatest barre to *Othi's* happinesse.
But I have framed in my jealous thoughts
A greater barre then that: young *Nero Cæsar*,
In whose acquaintance I of late have found
So neere a roome, as faire presages tell us,
Is like to weare th' Imperiall wreath: his power
May take her for mee from *Crispinus* armes.
But then perchance I loose her more then ever.
Or should hee see her now to rivall mee

I were

I were undone: hee's amorous, and oft
Sollicites mee to let him see my Mistres.
I for that friendship, which I dare not loose,
Dare not deny his importunity.
And therfore to prevent what may ensue
(For yet hee never heard *Poppæas* name)
Have made love to the faire freed woman
Young *Acte* of meane ranke, but such a face,
As whosoever had not seene *Poppæa*
Would thinke this *Acte* natures Masterpeice.
On her will I divert young *Nero's* love.
And to that purpose I have got her picture.
But here hee comes. *Enter Nero.*

Nero.

What *Otho*, still retir'd?
Where lives the face that breedes this melancholy?
There is no other cause can doe't: I know
Thou art not busy'd with affaires of state.
Prithee let mee see her: a friends counsell
May ease thy passion.

Otho.

Is not fit a Prince
Should stoope so low as to the passions
Of privatemen.

Nero.

The name of friend admits
Of no such distance.

Otho.

Is no man, whom you
Are pleas'd to call a friend, deserves that name,
Unlesse hee know himselfe to bee your servant.

Nero.

Come prithee leave thy fooling, and bee plaine.
Where there is no familiarity
Society is loste: why art thou fearfull
To let mee see her whosoere shee bee?

Otho.

Otho.

Sr. I could give you a plaine common reason,
If shee bee foule, shee is not worth your sight.
If faire, you are too great a rivall for mee.
But yet, know Sr. I am so free from those
Unworthy feares, that I dare trust my life,
My love, and all I have into your hands.

Nero.

Spoke like a friend, and thou maist safely doo't.
Then first behold her picture, and by that
Find whether shee bee worth the fight or no.

Nero.

Can any mortall beauty bee so sweete?

Otho.

I would there were not.

Nero.

Sure the painter flatters.

Otho.

Oh no, hee had not art enough to reach
The glory of it; were the substance here
How dull would this now lovely table show!
See how his greedy eyes devoure the picture.
Hee's caught, hee's caught; Cupid' I thanke thee now

Nero.

I never saw true beauty till this houre.
But wherfore didst thou wish there were no substance
So sweete as this? why would'st thou bee depriv'd
Of such a happinesse? but I perceive
It is thy feare: come, let it not bee so.
I but desire to see whether the painter
Have err'd or no: and do not thinke, my *Otho*,
That I will wrong thy love so much, or make
My wife *Octavia* jealous.

Otho.

Sr. how ere,
My life, my love, and fortunes all are yours. *Exeunt*

CLA

CLAUDIUS, NARCISSUS.

Narcissus.

our Majesty may yet prevent it all,
nd justly throw upon the Traitors heads
hat ruine which so boldly threatens you,
nd your too much abused family.
et *Cæsar* may bee safe, if hee will use
hat power the Gods have put into his hands.

Cæsar.

hat course, *Narcissus*, can wee run, to make
he people sensible of our estate,
hat danger threatens us, and how our Justice
forc'd to meete the treasons of a wife?

Narcissus.

et not too vaine a care of popular breath,
r what the Vulgar may surmise, outweigh
he safety of youre person' and youre house.
t I am most assur'd that all the world
xcept youre selfe, have long observ'd theire plots,
nd if they see your waken'd Justice now
rise to censure *Agrippinaes* death,
hey will not thinke the execution done
oo soone on her: these humble knees, Oh *Cæsar*.
hich for your safety I so oft have bow'd
efore the Gods, now to your sacred selfe
ow, entreating that you would bee safe,
nd not beleeve the Gods by miracle
ill worke for you, whilest you neglect your selfe.

Cæsar.

rise *Narcissus*, tis th' unhappy fate
f Princes ever (as *Augustus Cæsar*
as wont to say) the people ne're beleeve
hat treasons were complotted 'gainst theire persons
ntill those treasons take effect, and then
oo late perchance they pity and beleeve.

Narcissus.

But was the wise *Augustus* therfore slow
Or timorous to cut offenders off?
Fear'd hee the peoples whispers? *Cæsar*, no.
Hee well knew to use the sword hee had.
Hee had not else liv'd till times gentle hand
Dissolv'd in peace his long felicity,
And made the world by such continuance
Of power, beleeve hee was a God on earth.

Cæsar.

But some offendours are too great to suffer
The common course of Justice: against such
Wise Princes have forborne to draw the sword,
And rather sought some wayes of policy
How to ensnare them.

Narcissus.

Cæsar, those are wayes
As much unfit for Princes as unsafe.
As many Monarchs have in dangerous times
Beene ruin'd quite by going wayes too low
(Though they have seemed subtle) as proud subjects
Have beene undone by playing Princes parts.
And as this high, and open way befits
The power and person of earths greatest Monarch:
So it befits the times necessity.
You have already, *Cæsar*, shew'd your sword,
And if you strike not now, you do not right
Your selfe at all, but only arme your foes
With plots of mischeife to prevent their owne,
And hasten on your quicke destruction.
You have already threaten'd, and those speeches
By *Agrippina*, and her minion *Pallas*
Were overheard; who, like scene snakes will now
Best stirre themselves in a more desperate fury.
I have already cast mine owne poore life
Into the utmost hazard: but alas!

That is a thing not now considerable.
The Gods above can tell how willingly
For *Cæsar's* safety I would sacrifice
This life; make mee the cheifest instrument
Impose what part of this exploit you please
Upon *Narcissus* hand, and if I faile
To execute, I'll not refuse to dy.

Cæsar.

Oh my *Narcissus*; I have found thy faith
In other services: it is resolv'd,
Their pride shall feele my justice; thou shalt see
How soone I will secure my self and thee. *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

Wee are discover'd *Pallas*: all our drifts
Are sounded by *Narcissus*, and by him
Lay'd ope to *Cæsar*, who dissembling yet
The knowledge of it, seekes a suddaine way
To ruine both of us: nor had wee fear'd
So soone as felt his fury, had not wine
Betray'd his thoughts to us; you know last night
What speeches *Cæsar* in his drunkennesse
Let fall before us; and twas lately told mee
That meeting young *Britannicus* hee wept,
Confest that hee had wrong'd him, and there vow'd
A quicke redresse: what counsell shall wee take?

Pallas.

Wee have no time for counsell: but must act
As soone as thinke: wee goe not now to worke
But to prevent a mischeife, and our cure
Must bee as strong, and quicke of operation
As our disease is dangerous and suddaine.
That bird, that sees the snare, and will bee caught
Deserves his death: and since that *Cæsar* knowes
His purpose is discover'd (as *Narcissus*
Ha's before this inform'd him that wee heard it)

Hee'll

Hee'l quickly act what else hee had deferr'd.
No way is left us but to meete the danger,
And for prevention first attempt to doe
That which wee feare to suffer.

Agrippina.

By what meanes
Shall wee procure his death? for poison slow
Perchance may faile to lend a timely helpe
Unto our safety; and too quicke a venome
May make the fact supected.

Pallas.

Should the fact
Bee nere so much suspected, your estate
Would bee more safe then now it is; but who
Would dare to utter it when *Cæsar's* dead,
And your owne Sonne the Emperour: for so
My confidence assures mee it will bee.
Therfore bee speedy, Madam; for your danger
Where fame, where life, and Empire all are threaten'd,
Gives you no nice election. So 't bee done
No matter how.

Agrippina.

Thou hast confirm'd mee, *Pallas*.
The way's resolv'd already; there were lately
The fairest mushromes sent from Lybia
That ere these eyes beheld, a meat which hee
Affects with greedinesse; in one of those
Cæsar shall meete his death; if that should faile
His cheife *Physitian Xenophon* is mine.
But are things strong, and ready to confirme
The Empire upon *Nero*.

Pallas.

Tis the best
And happiest time, before *Britannicus*
Bee growne to riper yeares, while yet hee weares
His childish robe, and *Nero* has beene showne

To all the people in triumphall weedes.
But when the deed is done, place warily
Your guards about the Pallace gates, and keepe
Britannicus within; whileſt *Nero* back'd
By *Seneca* and *Burrhus*, by the campe
And *Senate* bee ſaluted Emperour,
And all be ſetled ſure.

Agrippina.

How fit a time
To work his own deſtruction *Cæſar* choſe
To tempt with threatning *Agrippinas* fury!

ACTUS III. SCENA. I.

PETRONIUS, OTHO, MONTANUS.

Petronius.

s *Nero* fir'd?

Otho.

xtremly. I at firſt
eem'd melancholy to looſe *Acte* ſo,
nd hee ſeem'd loath to wrong mee, but at laſt
When his deſires were high, I cunningly
Withdrew my intereſt, and gave way to his.
Which hee has taken for the greateſt favour

That ever man could doe him and I hope
It has endear'd him strongly.

Montanus.

Thou wilt grow
A happy man.

Petronius.

'Tis the best way to rise.
The wench is faire, and of behaviour
Wanton enough to make the arrantst novice
A perfect scholler in the schoole of *Venus*.
Seneca himselfe rather will give way
That hee should satisfie his lust on her
Then seeke th'adulteries of noble women.

Montanus.

But gentlemen, have you not heard the newes?
There is a great combustion in the Palace
As I have been inform'd, theeves are fall'n out.
The two proud freemen *Pallas* and *Narcissus*
Are clashing 'gainst each other.

Petronius.

I am glad ont.
I hope some curious rogeries will come on't.
Those are the fellowes that have rul'd the state
These many yeeres, and trampled on the lives
Of noble men *Cæsar's* credulous weakenesse.
But yet mee thinks *Narcissus* should not dare
Now to contest with *Pallas* he has got
Too great a start of him, and is too neere
Acquainted with the empresse.

Montanus.

So they say.

Otho.

Has a fine time on't who would think the rogue
Sould bee so ambitious as to court an Empresse?

Petronius.

'Twas her ambitions to bee made the wife

Of *Claudius*, that first made her prostitute
Her selfe so low, and court this fellows love,
Whom she perceiv'd to have a ruling power
Over his doating master, to ambition
Shee sacrific'd her honour tis well known.

Montanus.

And hee by dooing of the Empresse, takes
The surest way of keeping *Cæsars* love

Petronius.

Yes, there's no doubt of that. You know the proverbe.

Enter to them ANICETUS.

Anicetus.

Well met my Lords; I come to finde you out.

Otho.

What's the newes *Anicetus*?

Anicetus.

Great my Lord.
Cæsar, is wondrous sick; 'tis thought to death.
The Pallas is by souldiers guarded round.
A great and frequent *Senate* is assembling.
The Consuls and the Priests are making vowes
For *Cæsar's* safety.

Montanus.

Claudius is old

Petronius.

There have been other wayes to end a Prince
Besides old age. But what is that to us?
Come let's away and shew our forwardnesse
To joy or mourning as occasion serves.
I am prepar'd for both.

Montanus.

And so am I.

Otho.

Both must be done, if *Cæsar* dye, our greise
Must last but till the successor bee known;
And then wee must rejoyce.

Petronius.

Tis true.

Otho.

But I
Shall have true cause of joy if *Nero* reigne, *Exeunt.*

BRITANNICUS, OCTAVIA, XENOPHON.

Britannicus

Shall I not see my father ere hee dy?

Octavia.

Good *Xenophon.*

Xenophon.

Good Madam pardon mee,
Nothing is now so great an enemy
To his disease as noise and company.
Hee's lately fall'n into a gentle slumber.
Deep sleeps his feaver will not let him take.
I'll certify your highnesse when hee wakes.
And wait upon you.

Octavia.

Thankes good *Xenophon.* *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

I long to heare what favour *Nero* findes
In the Pretorian campe, how *Cæsar's* death
Is by the souldiers and the *Senate* taken.

Enter PALLAS.

Welcome my dearest *Pallas* What's the newes?

Pallas

Madam, as good as *Jove* himselfe could send,
No sooner in the campe was *Cæsar's* death
Divulgd, but *Burrhus* enters to his charge,
And *Nero* with him, who by all the cohorts
Was presently saluted Emperour.
Only some few were silent, and a while
Stood still expecting young *Britannicus*;

But

But when they saw their expectation
Was all in vaine, and none but *Nero* came,
Fearing at last to loose the Donative
Which *Burrhus* promis'd them in *Neros* name,
They joyn'd themselves unto the greater part.

Agrippina.

Britannicus within the Pallace here
Is safe enough for comming forth to day.
The *Senate* have scarse heard of *Cæsar's* death
For wee conceal'd it till all things were ready.

Pallas.

Now in a Princely chariot mounted high
Guarded by *Burrhus* and the souldiers
Nero sets forward to the *Senate* house.
But having past the campe, you need not feare
The *Senate*, Madam.

Agrippina.

Pallas thou wert ever
A messenger of lucky nowes to mee.
A safe contriver of the highest plots,
A happy instrument thou hast deserv'd
What ere thou hast enjoy'd, though thou have tasted
That which a *Cæsar* fu'd to taste, and bought
The world in recompence.
Pallas. If ever *Pallas*
Had any fire that could advance his thoughts
To high and great exploits, hee kindled it
At your cæleſtiall beauty, as from heaven
Prometheus stole that active fire, by which
Hee durst himself adventure to create
The nobleſt creature man. What act on earth,
What undertaking should he tremble at
Whom *Agrippina* favours animate?
And what had I been but a peece of earth
Cold, dull, and useleſſe, had I not been quickn'd
By your ætheriall touch.

Agrippina.

The happineſſe

Of this high day has made thee eloquent
Pallas
The love of royall *Agrippina* can
Inspire the dullest Soule with life and language.
When the *Idalian* Queene was pleas'd to grace
A shepheards boy more then his humble thoughts
Could hope or wish, the ravish'd tongue forgot
That rurall language which before it us'd.
Agrippina.
Ah *Pallas* what a glorious change is here!
How is the lowneſſe of our late deſpaire
Turn'd to the height of joy and happineſſe?
Pallas
Quicke reſolution well purſu'd will cure
The saddeſt ſtate.
Agrippina.
Goe thou and heare more newes,
Whileſt I diſpoſe of things about the Palace *Exeunt*

A SENATE, POLLIO CONSUL, VITELLIUS, SENECA, OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Pollio.
May all the Gods accept our ſacrifice,
And bee propitious to the vowes, that wee
Have vow'd for *Caeſar's* ſafety.
Vitellius.
Let the great
Divine and ſacred *Nero Claudius*
The care of heaven, ſole ruler of the earth,
And *Romes* high Father not forſake his world
So ſoone t' encreaſe the number of the Gods,
Enter BURRHUS.
Burrhus.
Haile to the *Conſul*, and this ſacred *Senate*.
Great *Claudius Caeſar's* dead, in whoſe high throne
With one conſent the ſouldiers have agreed

To

To ſeat young *Nero* his adopted ſonne;
And do by mee entreat your ſuffrages
Fathers conſcript; to ratifie their choice.

Senec.

Let not young *Nero's* yeeres diſparage him,
Nor trouble you, ſince happy preſidents
May well be ſhowne, grave Fathers. Great *Auguſtus*
Of glorious memory, no more in debt
To yeeres then hee began to rule the ſtate,
With what ſucceſſe not one in all this noble
And great aſſembly can bee ignorant.
But weigh with mee the difference of the times.
The ſtate is ſetled, and has flouriſh'd long
In peacefull government; no civill rents.
No factions now, nor armies are a foot
To ſtaine with *Latian* blood *Philippi* plaines,
To dye the *Aſſiak* and *Sicilian* Seas,
And through all regions beare th' unnaturall wounds
Of bleeding *Rome*. No ſuch affrighting names
As *Marcus Brutus*, *Caſſius*, *Lepidus*
Great *Pompey's* ſonne, or feirce *Antonius*
Arm'd with the power of halfe the Roman world
Stand to oppoſe him. Oh yee Gods how great!
How many dangers had beſet the ſtate
When young *Auguſtus* mannag'd it! yet hee
Withſtood and vanquiſh'd all thoſe difficulties.
And why ſhould *Nero* our elected Prince
Ag'd like *Auguſtus*, not bee able now
To ſway a peacefull ſcepter? for the right
To this high, wreath although *Britannicus*
Were borne the naturall ſonne of *Claudius*,
A Prince of hope enough, and may by ſome
Bee thought much wrong'd in this election,
Yet weigh it rightly, and no wrong is done.
For *Nero* was adopted. But beſides
The claime of his adoption, hee is borne

A truer heire to our Imperiall house
Sprung up from the loines of great *Augustus Cæsar*.
Britannicus from *Liviaes* sonnes alone.

Vitellius.

Nor are the yeares of young *Britannicus*
So ripe as his to govern.

Pollio.

Seneca,
Has wisely shewed his undoubted right,
And I with joy approve the souldiers choise.

Octavia.

The Gods preserve *Nero* our Emperour.

Otho.

Now is the height of all my wishes reach'd.

Enter NERO *with* TRIBUNE.

Tribune.

Roome for *Cæsar*.
Hee goes on, and takes his state.

Pollio.

Haile *Nero Cæsar*.

Seneca.

Haile great Emperour.

Vitellius.

Ever *Augustus*.

Otho.

Most invincible

Petronius

Most sacred *Tribune*

Montanus.

Holyest highest Priest.

Pollio.

Father of *Rome*

Nero

That honorable title
Is yet too weighty for my tender yeeres.
Then let mee weare it, fathers, when my paines
My toile and travell for the publike weale

By

By ayde and favour of the Gods have made
Mee worthy of it. But your free consent
Fathers conscript, your powerfull suffrages
Powerfull and honor'd as the voice of heaven
In confirmation of the souldiers choise
Fils mee with joy immortall, and shall binde
My best indeavours to requite that love.
My heart is cleare, my education
Was not in factious, in tumultuous times,
Or civil broiles, my former life has been
As free from doing as receiving wrong;
And therefore bring I to th' Imperiall Throne
No feares, no grudges, hatred or revenge,
This sacred *Senate*, which the world adores,
Shall still retaine her old prerogative
While *Nero* lives. My privat house affayres
Shall from the free Republicke bee divided,
And never turne the course of common Justice.
No publike Office shall bee bought for gold.
The sacred Consulary power shall judge
As heretofore, th' affaires of *Italy*
And forreigne provinces. My care alone
Sall bee to rule and lead the Souldiers.
And such to all the people will I bee
As I would wish th' immortall Gods to mee.

Vitellius.

Oh speech most worthy *Jupiter* himselfe!
Worthy for ever to be registred
In brazen Pillars for the world to read.

Pollio.

Let publike thanks by *Senate* bee decreed
To *Cæsar's* grace and goodnesse.

Nero.

No *Asinius*,
Let me deserve them first, first give me leave
What I have promis'd to performe in deedes,

That then if thankes or praiſes bee beſtow'd
They my bee judg'd as due, and better Crowne
Your owne true juſtice, and the Princes merits.

Pollio.

Oh happy *Rome* in ſuch an Emperour!
Long may hee reigne on earth, and late, oh late
Become a glorious ſtarre in Heaven

Tribune.

What word.
Will *Cæſar* give the watching ſouldiers?

Nero.

The excellent mother, *Tribune*, is their word.
Your company, noble *Conſul*, wee'll entreate
Home to the Pallace.

Pollio.

I'll attend on *Cæſar*.

Exeunt.

Manent OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

The Prince has promis'd faire.

Petronius.

Elſe *Seneca*,
That made the ſpeech for him had been too blame.

Otho.

Well, let him ſpeake as *Seneca* inſtructs
In publicke ſtill ſay I, I know his heart
And ſecret thoughts better then *Seneca*
Shall ever doe; and there are Joviall dayes
A comming, gallants, ſay I prophecy.

Montanus.

Will it bee lawfull to eat Lybian muſhroms,
And Britiſh oyſters without being cited
Before the cenſor?

Otho.

Yes *Curtius*, and to whore
For vacuation after them; thoſe gifts

Will

Will bee Court vertues. Come, the Prince is hopefull.

Petronius.

Would I might have the bringing of him up.

Otho.

If I can helpe it, thou ſhalt have a ſhare
In his tuition. Welcome *Aniceſus*, *Aniceſus*
Is it to mee you come?

Aniceſus.

To you, my Lord.
Caeſar deſires your company at the pallace.

Otho.

Caeſars deſire, is a command, which I
With joy obey, returne my humble duty
Good *Aniceſus*, I'll attend him ſtrait.

Exit Aniceſus.

Otho.

Now my mad ſhavers, do you know me yet?

Petronius.

Yes, very well; the queſtion is if thou
Wilt know us now.

Otho.

Tut man, *Nero* ſhall know you.
I'll bring you both into his neare acquaintance.
Now faire *Poppæa's* mine and mine alone.
Caeſar muſt grant my firſt petition,
Or elſe deny the love hee ſwore to mee
If ere hee wore the worlds Imperiall wreath.
His power muſt fetch *Poppæa* from her husband.
Nor is the deed ſo envious. Other Princes
Have done the like, and yet not tax'd in ſtory.

Petronius.

Beſides, hee knowes *Criſpinus* never lov'd him,
And was an enemy to his adoption.
'Gainſt him perchance hee will the ſooner grant it.

Exeunt

Agrip. This is the day that sets a glorious Crown
On all my great designes this day declares
My power, and makes the trembling world to know
That *Agrippina.* only can bestow
The *Roman* Empire, and command the wheel
Of suffring Fortune, holding in her hand
The fate of nation. Is there not a name
Above *Augusta* to enforme the world
How great I am? What *Roman* Deity
Shall I assume? the petty Goddesses
Would all resigne; but that they blushing think
Their stiles and altars are too meane for mee.
Lacinian Juno shall bee proud to share
Her glories all with mee, and think her power
Grac'd with my fellowship would brighter shine;
Or leave her name, and bee ador'd by mine.

Enter NERO, POLLIO, SENECA, *Burrhus.*

My *Nero* is return'd, haile *Nero Cæsar.*

Nero.

Haile great and deare *Augusta*, best of Mothers.
To whose sole care and goodnesse *Cæsar* owes
All those rich honours that he weares to day,
And will ackowledge ever

Agrippina.

Brighter still
For many yeeres let this bleest day returne,
That does bestow for my deare Lord and husband
The ne're-enough lamented *Claudius*
So true a solace on my greiv'd Soule.
This is that *Cæsar* now, on whom my hopes
And comforts all rely.

Nero.

This is that *Cæsar.*
Who in obedience and true filiall love
To *Agrippina* will for ever strive

With

With vertuous emulation to excell
Her most admir'd and exemplary goodnesse.

Pallas.

How well this piety becomes them both.

Pallas. *Exeunt Pallas*

Long live great *Nero Cæsar.*

Nero.

Thankes good *Pallas.*
Wee are indebted to thy faithfull service;
And therefore till wee finde some greater meanes
To make requitall, still retaine that office
Which in our father *Claudius* time thou held'st.
Bee still our steward of th' Emperiall house.

Agrippina.

Hee has deserv'd it.

Nero.

For the funerals
Of our dead father, in what state and order
They shall bee celebrated, wee refer
To you deare Mother.

Agrippina.

Let the order of them
Bee like *Augustus Cæsar's.* Let him have
A Censors funerals with divine honours,
And put among the number of the Gods.
Nor shall our grandmother great *Livia*
With her *Tiberius* to *Augustus* show
More piety, or more magnificence
Then wee to our divine sir, *Claudius.* *Exeunt*

ACTUS IIII.

NARCISSUS, GETA.

Narcissus.

If wee bee bound to think the Gods consider

This

This humane world, why are wee not as well
Bound to beleeve the greateſt members of it
On whom the fates of all the reſt depend,
Should be their greateſt care? why ſhould the Gods
Extend their narrow providence, and ſhow
Their power in woods and rurall villages,
Yet thinke th' Imperiall family of *Rome*
Not worth their care at all? for if they had
Where ſlept their juſtice, when great *Claudius*
Was murdred by his ſervants and his wife,
And they ador'd, and honour'd by the ſtate.
For acting that accurſed deed! what right
Can all the ſubject world receive from thence!
What good can dwell upon the earth with ſafety?
Proud *Pallas*, thou haſt got the victory
O're poore *Narciſſus*, and mayeſt ſafely triumph
With thy falſe Empreſſe; for no law can reach
The height you ſeare at now but yet take heed
That very crime, the ſame Impiety
That aided you in your foule enterpriſe
To vanquiſh mee and juſtice on my ſide,
May one day pull you downe.

Geta.

Alas *Narciſſus*!
Too truly *Rufus*, thou, and I foreſaw
This fatall ſtorme 'gainſt *Claudius* wofull houſe.
Britannicus is now the object growne
Of all mens pitty.

Narciſſus.

In the wrong hee did
Unto his hopefull ſonne hee needs muſt ſee
His own deſtruction woven. But if *Claudius*,
When I detected all their plots to him,
Had beene of nature quick and reſolute
Hee had prevented all, and ſcap'd his murder.
Tis certaine hee was poiſon'd

Geta

Geta.

Rome it ſelfe
I feare will rue that ſad adoption,
And in the wrongs of young *Britannicus*
Will beare too deepe a ſhare. while the fierce rule
Of *Agrippina* laſts.

Narciſſus.

What better hope
Does *Nero* promiſe us?
Thoſe that are neere, *Xiphilin*
And inward with his nature, doe ſuſpect
In him all ſeedes of vice and tyranny,
Though ſmoother'd for a time, at leaſt, not hurtfull
While he refraines from medling with the ſtate
That his night rambling revels, drinking feaſts,
And cruell ſports that he's delighted in,
Are vices of his nature, not his youth.

Geta:

Tis true, *Narciſſus*, I of late have heard
Many beginne to feare the prophecy
of *Aenobarbus* his deteſted ſire *Xiphilin.*
That nothing good could be begot twixt him
And *Agrippina*. Too too true alas!
Such prophecies of ſome of our late Princes
Have prov'd to *Rome*, as that *Auguſtus* made
Of the ſlow-jaw'd *Tiberius*, and *Tiberius*
Of his ſucceſſour *Caius*, whom hee nam'd
A Phaëton to the unhappy world.

Narciſſus.

All that I hope for is a wretched life,
If that bee not too much for mee to hope.
Into Campania will I go, but there
If death purſue mee, *Cæſars* armes are long,
And I am arm'd for any accident.
Let none, but with a ſpirit prepar'd to dye,
Dare to adventure on proſperity.

Geta.

Geta.

Rufus and I are both resolv'd to leave
The city too, wee are not safe within it.
But farre perchance, removed from her sight
Wee may escape fell *Agrippinas* spight.

Enter to them CRISPINUS.

Crispinus.

Ah *Lucius Geta*, I am now enforc'd
To that retirement, which wee lately talk'd of.
Because my danger mov'd mee not before,
Fresh cause is giv'n mee. Now I would not breath
The aire of *Rome* for all the wealth within it.

Geta.

What cause is that *Crispinus*? speake

Crispinus.

Poppæa,
That was my wife is carried from my house,
And divoc'd from mee by command from *Cæsar*,

Narcissus

The Prince begins his reigne most hopefully.

Crispinus.

Do you not wonder how I beare it thus?

Geta.

I must confesse the losse is wondrous great.

Crispinus.

True, had shee been my chaste and faithfull wife,
The losse had been beyond all estimation.
Nor could a manly spirit have borne the wrong.
But shee was none of mine, her heart, my *Lucius*.
As I have since discover'd, long ago
Was given to wanton *Otho*, and with him
Tis thought she stole her close adulterous houres.
For on that *Otho*, *Nero* has bestow'd her. *Xiphilin ex Dione*
Wanting her heart, that gawdy peice of Earth
That men call beauty, I should soone have scorn'd,
Though *Cæsar's* warrant had not come at all.

Shall

Shall wee be gone, my freind?

Geta.

With all my heart.
It was my feare *Poppæa* would have caus'd
Your ſtay too long.

Criſpinus.

I'll put her from my thoughts.

Narciſſus.

Farewell my Lords, all happineſſe attend
Your Country life, though I can hope for none.

Criſpinus

Farewell *Narciſſus* may the Gods protect thee. *Exeunt.*

Otho, Poppæa. *Otho,*

Thus greateſt Monarchs oft have given away
What they themſelves ne're ſaw, nor e're knew how
To value truely. *Nero* has beſtow'd
A guift unknown on mee, which I, that taſte
How ſweet it is, would not againe forgo
For all his Empires wealth.

Poppæa.

Nor would I change
My *Otho's* love for great *Auguſtus* ſtate.

Otho.

There to enjoy where both extreamly love
Is ſuch a happines (as I have heard
Some do obſerve) it ſeldome does befall
A marryed paire, or if it doe, that bliſſe
Endures not long, ſo envious are the fates.
But that's a dreame, my love, I doe not feare.

Poppæa.

Thou need'ſt not feare *Poppæas* conſtancy
Though *Cæſar* were thy rivall,

Otho.

Sweet I do not;
I dare not wrong thy truth, or take ſo much
From mine own happineſſe, as to ſuſpect

Thy

Thy constant minde at all: but *Cæsar's* power
Is of extent as large as mans desire.
Twas that, that made thee mine; and nought but that
That gave, can take my happinesse away.
Thou hast a face, *Poppæa*, that would cleare
A ravisher from guilt, that would excuse
The treason of a freind, and make my wrong
No staine to' *Cæsar's* honour, though the Gods,
Or *Cato* were his judges.

Poppæa.

Cæsar would not;
Hee loves thee wel besides a noble minde
Would scorne to taste the fruites of forced love,

Otho.

A long beseidging is as forcible
As an assault, and wins the fort as sure
Though not so soone.

Poppæa.

Nay spare your arguments.
I can looke through them; thou art fearfull, *Otho*,
That I should long to see the Court: alas
I have no such ambition to bee known
To *Agrippina* or *Octavia*.

Otho.

Mistake mee not, sweete love, I am so farre
From jealousy of thee, that 'twas my purpose
To make it my request that thou would'st go
And see great *Cæsar's* Court: nor do I thinke
Octavia would bee jealous, or that danger
That once befell the faire *Calphurnia*,
Whom *Agrippina* banish'd Italy
Because that *Claudius Cæsar* prais'd her beauty,
Should fall on thee.

Poppæa.

It shall not fall on mee,
I will noe see the Court: fy *Otho* fy

How

How wretchedly in striving to conceale
Thy jelousy, thou dost betray it to mee!
Why dost thou tell mee so of *Cæsar's* power,
Octavias wrath, *Calphurnias* banishment
Through *Agrippinas* envy? tis thy love
Better then all these subtle tricks will keepe
My thoughts at home.

Otho.

It shall appeare to thee
I do not feare at all; or if I did,
Tis not the failing of thy constancy.
Enjoy what freedome thou desir'st, *Poppæa.*
Now for a little while excuse my absence,
I must for sake thee, though unwillingly.
Cæsar, I feare, expected my return
Long before this love has beguil'd the time,
And made my stay seeme shorter then it is.
But I shall think till I returne againe
The houres are long, till then farewell *Poppæa.* *Exit.*

Poppæa.

I finde his feares alreadie, my estate
Was better farre before *Rufus Crispinus*
Was grave, and knew not wantonnesse enough
To make him jealous as this *Otho* does
That too unlawfull love, which then I shew'd
To *Otho*, is the mother of these feares.
Is old *Seleucus* the Magician come; *Enter Fulvia*

Fulvia:

Madam hee waites without,

Poppæa.

Go call him hither.
Seleucus is the master of his Art.
All his prædictions hitherto have prov'd
Most true and certaine. why should I desire
To know my future fate; and hasten woe
(Should it prove ill) before the time of woe?

But

But tis a longing that I cannot chuck *Enter Seleucus*
Welcom *Seleucus*, have you found it out?

Seleucus.

Madam, your scheme is drawn, and there I finde
The stars alot another husband to you

Poppæa.

Another after *Otho*?

Seleucus.

Yes, a third.

Poppæa.

What shall hee bee?

Seleucus

The greatest Prince on earth.

Poppæa

Ha, *Cæsar*?

Seleucus.

Yes; it must be *Cæsar*, Madam.
And tis as true as if the oracles
Of *Jove* and *Phœbus* had foretold it both.

Poppæa.

This *Cæsar* that now lives?

Seleucus.

I can no further
Instruct you Madam; what you heare is true.

Poppæa.

Drinke this *Seleucus* for my sake. Farewell.

Exit Seleucus

To bee *Augusta* is the greatest gift
The fates can give; nor does it seems to mee
A thing so much unlikely. *Otho's* feare
Perchance was fatall. If it were, in vaine
His care will bee, nor can hee then accuse
Mee, but the fates that overrul'd my love.

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

It is decreed, *Silanus* must not live.

Th'

Th' Imperial blood, that runs within his veines
Were there no other cause, is crime enough.
Hee is descended in the same degree
That *Nero* is from great *Augustus* loines.
And some have lately whisper'd that his age
Is more mature for soveraignty then *Nero's*.
Besides thou know'st his brother *Lucius*,
That should have married young *Octavia*,
By us was hunted to his death; and hee
May meditate revenge.

Pallas.

You need not feare
A spirit so sluggish as *Silanus* is.
Your brother *Caius Cæsar*, in the midst
Of all his feares and jealousyes to which
Hee sacrific'd so many noble branches
Of your Imperiall house, contemn'd *Silanus*
As one in whom there was no spirit, or danger,
And call'd him nothing but the golden beast.

Agrippina.

Wee cannot tell, if times of trouble come,
How much that beast by courage of attendants
And confluence of souldiers may bee chang'd.
Hee is Proconsul now of *Asia*,
And may here after, if the people should
Maligne our government, bring power against us.

Pall.

If you will have it so *Publius Celerius*
And *Aelius* now going for *Asia*
Have undertaken there to poison him.

Agrippina.

Let it bee done. But *Pallas*, first of all
Let a centurion bee dispatch'd into
Campania, to kill *Narcissus*. there *Xiphilin.*
Hee must not live, that did contrive our ruine
And knowes, I feare, the meanes by which we scap'd it.

By

By our command it shall bee warranted.
But tell me Pallas, ere thou goest, are all
The German souldiers come?
Pall: Madam they are.
You have a royall guard. *Ag*: Go deerest *Pallas*,
Dispatch *Celerius* into *Asia*,
And the Centurion to Campania. *Exit Pallas*
Now *Agrippina* is her selfe, and all
The power and dignity she holds, her own.
I do not owe it to a marriage bed,
Or poore dependance on a husbands love,
Where every minion might have rival'd mee.
There is no power, no state at all, but what
Is undependent, absolute and free.
Besides my proper and peculiar guards
Two lictors by the *Senate* are assign'd
Distinct from *Caesar* and the Consuls state
To wate on mee, that all the world at last
Th' Imperiall power may in a woman know.
I was an Empresse but ne're reign'd till now. *Exit*

A banquet.

Enter NERO, BRITANNICUS, OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS, ACTE.

Ne. Come sit my friends, they here are freely welcome
That bring free Joviall hearts farre hence bee all
Sad lookes, sower gestures, and Censorious thoughts.
They fit not *Nero's* table. kisse mee *Acte*,
And smile upon the feast. *Acte*: *Caesar's* command
Is warrant strong enough.

Nero.

And thou shalt finde
No rigid *Catoes* here.

Petronius.

True, great *Caesar*,
Let such sowre *Scauri* sit at home, and write
Against the pleasure of this happy age
Dull satyres, such as water, or the lees

Of Tuſcan wine beget, let them admire
Thoſe old penurious times, when Curius fed
On leekes and onions, when *Fabritius*
Feaſted the frugall *Senate* with hung beefe!
And rufty bacon, and in earthen pots
Drunke ſmal Etrurian wine, let them bee ſtill
Such as themſelves would make themſelves, unworthy
To taſte the plenty that *Rome* now enjoyes.

Nero.

Why did our famed anceſtours ſo farre
Extend their conquering armes, and ſtrive to get
The riches of the world, but that their Nephews
Might now enjoy them? twere ingratitude
To their rich labours, ſhould wee ſcorne to uſe
What they have got: or if the uſe of it
In us bee riot, ſure 'twas avarice
In them, that toil'd ſo much to purchaſe it.

Otho.

Which of thoſe rigid Cenſors, that declaime
Againſt the vices of the times, and tax
Rome as luxurious now would call it vertue
In a rich Citizen, whoſe ſtore-houſes
Were fraught with the beſt proviſions, his cheſts crow-
His cellars full of rich Campanian wine (ded
Yet hee himſelfe to drinke the courſeſt lees,
To feede on ackornes, pulſe, and crabs, to wrong
His nature, and defraud his Genius?
'Tis ſaid the Furies keep pin'd *Tantalus*
From taſting thoſe delicious fruits hee ſees.
Such would the Roman vertue bee, ſhould ſhee
Affright her ſonnes the maſters of the world
From taſting that which they themſelves poſſeſſe.

Petronius.

'Tis true; thoſe former ages were moſt frugall;
Wee thank them for't, the better is our fare.
Let thoſe that liſt, now when they have no need,

Still

Still imitate, and beast their hungry vertue,
Whilest wee poore sinners are content with pleasants,
Numidian hens, and *Lybian* purple wings
Wilde goates, bores, hares, thrushes, and mushrooms,
Oysters, and mullets, and such vicious meates.

Nero.

Fill mee some wine. *Montanus* melancholy,
And silent now?

Montanus.

Cæsar, I was but listning
To heare *Petronius* goad morality,

Nero.

Otho I know cannot bee melancholy,
Hee is a bridegrome, and but new possest
Of that faire treasure he has courted
So long, well *Otho*, I must have a sight
Of faire *Poppæa*,; such I know shee is.

Otho

Shee is unworthy of great *Cæsar's* sight.

Nero.

A round, go *Anicetus* bring the lots;
Because that no respect of power shall let
The freedome of our mirth, who ever drawes
The longest cut shall bee our King to night,
And bee obey'd what ere hee shall command.
I will resigne my chaire to him. Com draw. *Enter Anicetus they draw.*
Tis I that am your King.

Montanus.

I shall beleive
That Fortune has her eyes.

Britannius

In getting Crownes
Nero, thy fortune is too good for mine.

Nero.

I know none envy mee.

Brit.

Britannicus

No envy can
Redreſſe my wrongs. *Nero.*
I will beginne with *Otho.*
I do command thee ſend by *Anicetus*
Some truſty token that immediatly
May fetch *Poppæa* hither to the banquet.

Otho.

It ſhall bee done, this ring will fetch her hither,
Exit Anicetus.
I ever though 'twould come to this.

Petronius.

Thy plot
Of bringing *Acte* in, I ſee has fail'd.

Otho.

I care not much; he would at laſt have ſeene her.

Nero.

Thou wilt not frowne my *Acte*, though thou ſee
Another beauty here.

Acte.

No royall *Cæſar*,
Nor ſhall you heare mee envious, or detracting,
Although I know *Poppæa* is a Lady
Whoſe beauty does as farre excell poore *Acte*
As *Cinthia* does the leſſer ſtarres, or *Venus*
The other Sea-nimphs.

Nero.

Freely ſpoke, faire *Acte.*

Acte.

Here you ſhall finde the ſaying does not hold
That women are detractors from each other.

Nero.

Meane time begin a health.

Montanus

So pleaſe it *Cæſar*
To great *Auguſta, Agrippina's* health.

Nero.

Let it go round. And now *Petronius*
I come to thee, I doo command thee write
A Satyre presently against those pleasures
Thou didst so lately prayse, against th' attire,
And costly diet of this notorious age.
This is thy Taske.

Petronius.

I must obey the King:
And now's the fittest time for such a satyre.
I never finde my vertue of that strength
As to contemne good Victualls, but upon
A well fill'd stomacke.

Nero.

Give him wine to heighten't.

Petronius.

I've writ already a Satirick Poëm
In a grave angry way, where I complaine
That Romes excesse, corruption, luxury,
Ruin'd the present governement, and twixt
Cæsar, and *Pompey* caus'd a civill warre.
Listen, and heare my castigations.
„ Now all the world victorious *Rome* had wonne
„ All lands, all Seas, the morne and evening Sunne,
„ Nor was content; the Ocean's furrow'd ore
„ With armed ships; if any farre-hid shore,
„ Or land there were, whence burnish'd gold was brought
„ It was their foe: by impious warre they sought
„ (Fates fitted so) for wealth, old known delight
„ They scorne, and Vulgar bare-worne pleasure slight,
„ Pearles in th' Assirian lakes the souldiers love.
„ Bright polish'd earth in hew with purple strove.
„ Numidia marble brings the Scythian yeilds
„ His early fleece, the Arabs spoile their fields,
„ But see more ruine yet, and greater wounds
„ Of injur'd peace, the Mauritanian grounds

An

„ And Libyan Ammon's farthest woods, to get
„ Wilde beasts are search'd whose teeth a price must set
„ Upon their death, fierce Tigers fetch'd from farre,
„ And stalking stately on the Theater
„ Are fed with humane slaughter to delight
„ The peoples eyes: after the persian rite
„ (Alas I shame to speake it, and display
„ The ruine-threatning fates) they cut away
„ Manhood from growth spoil'd youths, for Venery
„ Softning their nature, to keepe backe thereby
„ In spite of time, their age. her selfe in kinde
„ Abused nature seekes, but cannot finde.
„ They dote on Catamites, weake bending hammes,
„ Unnerved bodyes, and a thousand names
„ Of new attires, loose haire of men, in whom
„ All man is lost! lo slaves from Affrick come,
„ Rich Citron boards, bright purple, which to view
„ Cousening the senses beare a gold like hew.
„ A wanton traine, in wine and surffets drown'd
„ The far fetch'd table do encompasse round.
„ The wealth that all the spacious world containes
„ By lawlesse armes the roming souldier gaines,
„ Their gluttony growes witty; guilt-heads caught
„ At Sea, alive are to their tables brought.

Nero.

No more, my furious Satyrist, thou hast chid
The times sufficiently.

Petronius.

If you bee pleas'd
I have obey'd.

Nero.

Well, I perceive *Petronius*
A man may write a Satyre, and yet bee
No *Scaurus, Curius,* or *Fabritius.*

Petronius.

A Satyrist should bee the contrary,

And know those vices, which hee meanes to tax.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* thy taske is next,
Stand up and sing a song.

Britannicus

Give mee some time:
I cannot doo't extempore, what subject?

Nero.

Choose that your selfe.

Britannicus.

Then give me leave to sing
Mine owne misfortunes, how I came to loose
The Roman scepter.

Nero.

How! that will not fit
A feast of mirth.

Britannicus.

No, let them laugh that winne.

Petronius.

A good smart youth.

Nero.

This must not bee endur'd,
I must bee freed from this continuall feare:
Then bee excus'd, be merry Gentlemen,
I wonder *Anicetus* stayes so long.

Enter ANICETUS *with* POPPÆA.

But see they come, is this *Poppæa*, *Otho*.

Otho.

Tis shee great *Cæsar*.

Nero.

Wonder of her sex!
Bright paragon of *Rome*! all beautyes yet
That I have seene, have been but foiles to set
A greater lustre on this staure of light.

Otho.

His eys are fixt; his changing lookes do speake

A dep

A depth of passion, or my jealous feares,
Dazle mine eyes too much.

Petronius.

Tis so; sheer's lost.
If ever Lady were a tennis ball
Tis this, shee's bandy'd so from one to tother.

Nero.

Must then another reape the envy'd fruit
Of my injustice? must *Poppæa* bee
My crime, that tooke her from her other Lord,
To be his pleasure?

Otho.

Is great *Cæsar* sad?

Nero.

No *Otho*, still shee shewes more faire and faire.
I cannot check my love; sit faireſt Lady.
And with your lustre grace our feast. I see
Thou art a most incomparable judge
In beauty, *Otho*, and were I to choose
A wife againe, I'd truſt no eye but thine.

Otho.

Would I might serve you Sr. in any thing.

Nero.

But tell mee thy oppinion in one question.
Which dost thou thinke the noblest in a Prince,
If hee would use his power, and do an act
That may bee thought unjust, to do't for friendship,
Or satisfaction of his owne delight.

Otho.

Sr. had you made the case a private man's
(For the delights of Princes; as themselves,
Wee must count sacred) I could soone resolve it.

Nero.

Let it bee so for tis the same in justice.

Otho.

I thinke it noblest then to do't for friendship.

For friendship ever was held honorable,
But satisfaction of our own delights
A thing of weakenesse rather then of honour.

Petronius.

I see his drift.

Nero.

Augustus Cæsar then
And I by power have done the selfe same act.
But in the cause I have excell'd *Augustus*,
For hee to satisfie his own hot love
From *Claudius Nero* tooke faire *Livia*.
I from *Crispinus* took a brighter beauty
To shew my selfe no lover, but a frend.
Doo not mistake mee *Otho*, and suppose
I do repent the favour I have done
I know tis well bestow'd.

Otho.

Twas such a favour
That I confesse, great *Cæsar*, as no tongue
Can bee enough expressive; so tis hard
To find a heart that's large enough to pay
Sufficient thankes in thought, but pious men
Have still acknowledg'd that no thankes of ours
Can æqualize the bounty of the Gods.
And Princes are like them, should I thinke lesse
I should both wrong the giver, and the gift.

Nero.

In valuing her aright thou shew'st thy selfe
As wise as just. I wish thee joy of her.
But fairest Lady, since it was so late
Before you grac'd our feast, I cannot thinke
That I have entertain'd you yet at all.
The scene shall therefore change, another roome
Shall bid *Poppæa* welcome to the Court.

Exeunt.

Vitel-

VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Vitellius.

Yet *Cæsar* and his mother well agree.

Pollio.

The Gods continue it, but *Vitellius*,
I feare the sequell. *Agrippinaes* fierce
And haughty disposition will too much
Provoke her sonne 'tis thought, and hee too forward
To throw all nature off.

Vitellius.

I thinke so too.
And therefore I could wish that *Agrippina*
Would goe a gentler way, shee must not build
Too much upon her merits, though wee know
Twas shee that put the scepter in his hand.
For vicious natures, where they once begin
To take distaste, and purpose no requitall,
The greater debt they owe, the more they hate

Pollio.

Besides shee 'll find it harder far to worke
Her ends upon a sonne then twas to rule
A doating husband.

Pollio.

Time will shew it all,
And we ere long shall know which way to leane.

Exeunt.

BURRUS, SENECA.

Burrhus.

Will *Agrippina* sit to day with *Cæsar*
On his Tribunall, to give audience
To those Armenian Embassadors?

Seneca.

There is no doubt shee would; but I have spoil'd
That state I hope; for I have councell'd *Nero*.
That if shee come, hee shall arise and meet her,
As if hee did it in respect, and duty

Deferring th' audience of th' Embassador,
I hope shee will not understand our drift.

Burrhus.

Pray heaven shee do not, for you know her fierceneſſe,

Seneca.

It would bee *Romes* disgrace, the *Senates* shame
And my great crime if the Embassadors
That come to plead their countryes cause at Rome,
Should see a woman perching up with *Cæsar*
Into the chare to give them audience.
And sit commanding ore the Roman ensignes:
Twas not the custome of our Ancestors
To see such sights.

Burrhus.

True *Lucius Seneca*,
Our Ancestours had no such kinde of women,
Shee in her heart's a man, and you mistake
If you esteem her onely *Cæsars* mother;
Not his Colleague, and partner in the Empire
Or more then so.

Seneca.

I am not so ingratefull
To hate the woman, since I know it was
Her favour, that repeal'd my banishment.
But I dislike these things, that forreigne states
In her unseemly carriage should behold *Xiphilin.*
The shame of Rome, and would shee keepe a temper
Fitting the quality of her sex and place,
I should admire the bravery of her minde.

Enter NERO, VITELLIUS, POLLIO,
NERO, *takes his state, after them*
the Embassadors.

Embassadors.

Long live great *Nero Cæsar*, the cheife care

Of

Of heaven, and higheſt Souveraigne of the Earth,
The Princes of *Armenia*, *Volageſes*
And *Tiridates* greete your Majeſty
By us, and do congratulate the honor,
Which ſince divineſt *Claudius* left the earth
To make a God in heaven, is fall'n on you.
And to your high Tribunall doo referre
The controverſie that is now betwixt them.

Nero. *Enter Agrippina.*

My mother's come, deſer th' Embaſſadors
As twas appointed *Seneca*.

Seneca.

I will.

Nero.

Haile deareſt mother.

Agrippina.

Wherefore riſes *Cæſar*
From his Tribunall when affaires of ſtate
Are brought before him?

Nero.

No reſpect can bee
Too much for mee to give great *Agrippina*.

Agrippina.

Excuſe mee, *Cæſar*, if it bee reſpect,
Tis now unſeaſonable, take your ſeate,
I'll ſit with you my ſelfe, and here th' affaires
Of theſe Armenian Embaſſadors.

Nero.

Wee have deferred the buſineſſe a while,
And thought upon a fitter time to heare it.

Agrippina.

If you ariſe becauſe the audience
Is ended or deferr'd upon juſt reaſons,
Tis not reſpect to mee that made you riſe,
As you alldg'd at firſt, but I have found it,
The reaſon that deferr'd this audience

Was *Agrippinaes* comming.

Burrhus.

This I fear'd.

Seneca.

Twas carryed ill of *Cæsar* at the first.

Agrppina.

I see thou blusheſt, *Nero*, and may'ſt juſtly,
To call that reverence, which was affront,
Was a diſſembling not befitting *Cæsar*.
And to affront a mother ſo deſerving
Was not the duty that befitted *Nero*.

Nero.

Can neareſt *Agrippina*. thinke her *Nero*.
Will ever doo an act that may bee judg'd
Affront to her

Agrippina.

This was thou know'ſt it *Nero*.
And ſo does thy adviſer *Seneca*
From him it came, no other Senator
Durſt to have councell'd my diſgrace but hee

Seneca.

Never will *Seneca*, ſo much obleidg'd
To *Agrippinaes* royall favour, wiſh
Or councell her diſgrace.

Agrippina.

Oh *Seneca*.
Philoſophy nere taught ingratitude.
If you had thought the place unfit for mee,
You might have told mee privarly before,
Not us'd this tricke which how ſo ere it hold
In Stoticiſme, I'm ſure is nought in ſtate.

Vitellius.

Shee payes him home.

Pallas.

Her ſpirit cannot brooke
The leaſt appearance of an injury.

Agrippina

Agrippina.

Cæsar, I'll leave thee now, nor shall my presence
Bee any hinderance to thy state affaires.

Nero.

I'll go a long with you.

Agrippina.

For *Seneca*
I'll shortly teach him new Philosophy.

Exeunt.

manent. BURRHUS, SENECA.

Seneca.

Shee's full of anger; but it moves not mee,
Since what I did was just, and for the honour
Of *Rome* and *Cæsar*; honest actions
Will bee enough protection to them selves.

Burrhus.

Take the best courses to prevent her fury.

Seneca.

Ah noble *Burrhus*, it must bee hereafter
Our greatest care to curbe that womans pride,
And what wee can remove her from all rule
And government of state, for *Agrippina*
Is of too hot and fierce a disposition.

Burrhus.

What should wee doo? twere pitty to incense
Her sonne against her.

Seneca.

The Gods forbid that wee
Should strive to make the Prince unnaturall.
But to prevent this inconvenience
I will perswade young *Cæsar* not with purpose
To wrong his mother, somewhat to abate
Her dangerous greatenesse, to remove from her
Part of her guard of German souldiers,
And to displace her wicked counsellour
That insolent and Lordly free'dman *Pallas*.

Burrhus.

Burrhus.

You need not use perswasions to your Pupill
(The Gods forgive it if I judge amisse)
To stand against his mother, I much feare
Hee will too quickly hate her, for no reason
To state belonging; but because shee growes
Imperious over him, and strives to curbe
His lust and riots, those, those *Seneca*
I feare are seedes of future tyranny
And for his love (as if the fates decreed
To make his passions all preposterous)
His vertuous wife noble *Octavia*
The only instance in this wicked age
Of women great and good, is loath'd by him.

Seneca.

That most afflicts mee: could wee finde a cure
For that disease, all other maladyes
A riper age will in some part redresse,
And I will strive to change them by degrees,
And get him to forsake his loose associates.
But let us first endeavour to remove
Fierce *Agrippina* from all rule of State.

Burrhus.

I'l joyne with you, and use my best endeavours.

Exeunt.

NERO.

Nero.

Shall I that am an Emperor, bee check'd,
Control'd and baffled in my Pallace thus?
I will remove this mother farre from mee,
And give command to *Burrhus* to provide
That house that was *Antoniaes* for her.
The Pallace shall bee free to my delights,
I make no doubt but that the people know,
And hate her pride, and will the lesse repine
At what I do against her, I have told her

For

(For shee provok'd mee past all patience)
Part of my minde already, shee shall rue
Perchance too late the fiercenesse shee has shew'd

Exit.

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

Ingratefull *Nero*, is thy mothers power
So soone offensive growne? canst thou so soone
Cast off all filiall duty'es, and forget
What I deserve from thee? wouldst thou deprive
Mee of all power that gave all power to thee?
Did I so wickedly for thee procure
The height of humane state, that thou shouldst take
All state from mee with greater wickednesse?
Oh wronged *Claudius*, this sad punishment
My bloody treason, and ingratitude
To thy offended *Manes* justly payes.
By the most loving, and most injur'd Lord,
The worst of wives was more belov'd then now
The best of mothers by a wicked Sonne.
I'le make him know what hand it was that rais'd
His fortunes to this height: but wherefore weeps

Enter Octavia.

My deare *Octavia*?

Octavia.

What accursed fate
Pursues the wofull *Claudian* family?

Agrippina.

Deare daughter speake thy griefe.

Octavia.

Was I best to'd,
Or rather lost in marriage, to advance
Upon my brother's ruine, *Nero's* state
To bee by him defyed, hated and made
A base freed-womans slave?

Agrippina.

Agrippina.

What freed woman?

Xiphilin.

Octavia.

Acte thy *Nero's* concubine my mistris
That dares within the palace to contest
Nay to revile *Octavia.*

Agrippina.

She dares not,
Nor shall she doo't, I'll slit the strumpets nose,
If she dare speake 'gainst thee.

Octavia.

You cannot mother.
Nero delights in none but her, his soule
In *Acte* lives, on her he does bestow
That love, that's due to mee: But mee hee loaths;
Oh dismall love, Oh fatall marriage!

Agrippina.

Take comfort sweete *Octavia*, I'll redresse
Thy wrongs, or venture mine owne fall with thee.

Enter Nero.

Nero.

You have complain'd I see, *Octavia.*
Is there a chiding toward?

Agrippina

Has thy guilt,
And th' unkinde wrongs thou hast already done
Unthankefull *Nero*, to thy vertuous wife

Xiphilin.

Arm'd thee with such an impudence, that now
Thou canst prevent her just accusing thus?

Nero.

How's this?

Agrippina.

Mee thinkes although thou hadst no sparke
Of goodnesse left thee, yet in Pollicy

Thou

Thou shouldst not dare maintain a base borne strumpet
Against thy lawfull wife great *Claudius* daughter.

Nero.

Mee thinkes in policy you might remember
You speake to *Cæsar*, not a childe.

Agrippina.

Tis true,
Thou hast forgot the duty of a childe.

Nero.

I will bee better known; if I bee Croft
In my delights, I will bee bold to crosse
You in your pleasures too

Agrippina.

Oh heavens, what pleasures
What joyes or studies have I ever had
But to preferre thee *Nero*? are my cares
And all my labours thus requited now?
Let not too vaine and foolish confidence
Of what thou art, make thee presume to wrong
Thy mother and thy wife; or thou shalt know
The Empires lawfull heire is yet alive.
The wrong'd *Britannicus* is growing up
To take his right, and to revenge the wrongs
Which hee and all his family susteine *Xiphilin.*
I'll go my selfe to the *Prætorian* Campe,
And plead his cause before the Souldiers.
There let one-handed *Burrhus*, and that base
Unthankefull exile *Seneca*, appeare
Against the daughter of *Germanicus*.

Nero.

Yes plead the cause of young *Britannicus*;
And when y' have done, provide an advocate
To plead your own.

Exeunt Nero.

Agrippina.

Gone so abruptly from us!

Slights

Slights hee mine anger so?

Octavia.

Madam I feare
You tooke too harsh a way; his lookes were wilde
And full of rage; my fatal misgiving soule
Tels mee some mischeife's working in his thoughts.

Agrippina.

Feare not, *Octavia*, wee'll take the best
And surest courses to prevent the ill
That may ensue: and if nature advice
And councell cannot bridle him, wee'll use
Another meanes to curbe his insolence:
I have already by my bounty made
Most of the Tribunes and Centurions.
My guards are strong, and shall bee vigilant
Over the safety of *Britannicus*,
As mine own person, there's no open act
Of mischiefe can bee on the sudd'aine wrought.

Octavia.

The Gods I hope will guard our innocence.

Exeunt.

NERO *solus.*

Nero.

My feares have been too slow, and twas high time
That *Agrippinaes* thundring threates had wak'd
My sleeping mischeefes; which shall now no more
Study disguises, but appeare in bold
And open acts with *Cæsars* stampe upon um,
Feareleſſe of vulgar whispering jealousyes.
Upon thy death, *Britannicus*, a price
No lesse then *Romes* imperiall wreath is set.
The deede, when done, will priviledge it selfe,
And make the power of *Nero* strong enough
To warrant his misdeede, who dare revenge
Or blame th' offence that frees mee from a rivall?
But I shall leave a worse, and nearer farre

Behinde,

Behinde, my mother *Agrippina* lives;
Shee lives my rivall, nay my partner ſtill,
Nay more then that my Queene and Governeſſe.
I am no Prince, no man, nothing at all
While *Agrippina* lives, muſt ſhee then live
To make mee nothing? muſt the name of mother
Outweigh a ſcepter? could the name of husband
Protect her *Claudius*? no; her owne example
Shall teach mee ſtate: but firſt *Britannicus*
Muſt bee remov'd; his death aſſures my ſtate,
And makes mee able to conteſt with her.
That gentle poiſon, which *Locuſta* gave him,
If poiſon 'twere, whileſt wee did vainely feare
The peoples talke, has kept my feares alive.
Where is this hagge?

Enter Locuſta.

Locuſta.

Ceſar.

Nero.

Witch. beats her.
Feind, fury, divell.

Locuſta.

Mercy, mercy, *Ceſar.*

Nero.

I'll hew thy curſed carcaſſe into atomes,
Thou gav'ſt *Britannicus* an antidote
In ſtead of poyſon.

Locuſta.

Twas a gentle poyſon,
And ſuch as you commanded mee to make;
Hold *Ceſar* hold; I will redeeme all yet.

Nero.

Do it or dy, make mee a poiſon ſtrong,
A quicke and ſpeeding one.

Locuſta.

It ſhall bee done.

No

No sooner tasted, but it shall destroy.

Nero.

I'll see the tryall of it, and reward
Thy service well; but if *Britannicus*
Out live this day, this day shall be thy last.

Exeunt.

ACTUS V. SCENA. I.

BURRHUS, VITELLIUS, ANNICETUS, *Souldiers*

Burrhus.

It is the will of, *Cæsar*, souldiers
You must bee all discharg'd from guarding her.
But you shall have allowance, and thus much
I'll promise for your comforts, you shall bee
The next that are ascrib'd into the list
Of the *Prætorian* campe.

Souldiers.

Thankes noble *Burrhus*.

Burrhus.

Go *Anicetus*, give command that straight
That house, which was *Antoniaes* bee prepar'd
For *Agrippina*, and her family.
Cæsar will have the Palace to himselfe.

Vitellius.

Does *Agrippina* know't

Burrhus.

Burbus.

Not yet I think.
Is there displeasure then 'twixt her and *Cæsar?*

Burbus.

I know not. you'll excuse my haste, my Lord
I must take leave.

exit *Burbus.*

Vitellius.

I like not these new turnes.
I came to visit her: but now I'll spare
My haile this morne. whither so fast my Lord?

Pollio.

To visit *Agripina.*

Vitellius.

Stay, I'll tell you.
There is some diffrence twixt her and *Cæsar.*
Her guards are tane away. I parted now
From *Burbus*, who dischang'd them. shee her selfe
Shall be remov'd from the Imperiall palace.

Pollio.

I like not that; I'll spare my visit then.

exeunt

PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

Otho will loose his wife then.

Petronius.

Yes, no doubt;
And I believe must leave the City too.
Nero's extremely fir'd, and hee will have her
Alone; poore *Otho* must not rivall *Cæsar*
Nor indeed is it fitting that the husband
Should make th' adulterer a cuckold.

Montanus.

Do'st thou beleeve, *Petronius*, that this change
Pleases *Poppæa?*

Petro-

Petronius

Yes, I warrant her.
Shee thinkes her beauty never could have done her
A greater service.

Montanus.

But shee seem'd to love
Otho extremely.

Petronius.

I confesse *Montanus*
I thinke her appetite stood well to *Otho*,
For it is a rascall of a winning carriage
And curious feature; but shee has enjoyed him
Sometime already, and that passion
Which you call love, does move in a degree
So low, and feeble, it is soone swallow'd up
In the deepe torrent of ambition.
Poppæa's proud; nor can that breast of hers
Harbour a love so strong, but it must yeeld
To pride her quality predominant.

Montanus.

What can shee bee but *Nero's* concubine?
I see not what high honour lyes in that.

Petronius.

You cannot tell what shee may bee in time.

Montanus.

Shee cannot bee *Augusta*; that high name
Octavia, while shee lives, will keep, hee dares not
Forsake that wife (how e're hee do affect her)
To whom hee may bee sayd to owe the Empire.

Petronius.

For mine own part, I know not how twill go.
But I dare sweare *Poppæa* e're this time
Has ask'd and heard what the Chaldeans say
About her fortunes: our fine dames of *Rome*
Must still bee tampering with that kinde of cattell.
Their doggs, their monkeys, and themselves do nothing
Without

Without th' advise of such a cunning man,
Hast thou seene *Otho* lately?

Montanus.

Yes to day:

Petronius.

How does hee looke upon the businesse?

Montanus.

Faith somewhat sad; but *Cæsar* seemes to use him
So wonderfull kindly that he cannot thinke
Hee's wrong'd at all.

Petronius.

Prithee let's finde him out. *Exeunt*

PALLAS *solus.*

Pallas.

No longer steward of th' Imperiall house!
Are greatest benefits so soone forgot
By wicked Princes? tis and ever was
The fate of Courts, Monarchs unjustly hate
Acknowledgment: what power, what honor now
Does *Nero*, hold but what hee owes to mee?
My merrit, nay my wickednesse, which did
To him encrease the merit, for this heart
Has bled the more for my ingratitude
To my best master *Claudius*, his sad wrongs
Another now revenges! oh *Narcissus*,
Perchance the conquest that I got ore thee,
When wee two strove about the successor
To *Claudius Cæsar*, will hereafter prove
More fatall to the conqueror, then him
That lost the day, thou in *Campania*
Di'dst happily, though hunted to thy death
By us; and carry'dst to thy grave the honor
Of ayding the just side, oh Royall Empresse,

Enter Agrippina.

I feare our care to raise unthankfull *Nero*
Will prove at last our own destruction

My-

My places losse I weigh not, but for feare
It prove a step to your dishonour, Madam.

Agrippina.

Tis for my sake that thou hast lost it, *Pallas*,
With mee my frends are hated. Oh sad fate
That followes impious actions! well perchance
And happily might I have liv'd if wrong'd
Britannicus had reign'd! Oh would the losse
Of this unworthy life could yet procure
That injur'd Prince his due.

Pallas.

Can fortune turne
The course of things so strangely, that you Madam,
The Prince his mother and his raiser too
Should wish the others reigne.

Agrippina.

It can, it can.
This is the power and justice of the Gods,
That when wee thinke our selves most safe in ill,
Can frustrate all our confidence, and make
That power, which seem'd to bee our prop, to bee
Our onely cause of ruine, wee are children,
Vice makes us children, like to them, wee cry
For Knives to hurt our selves with, and the Gods
To punish us oft grant what wee desire.

An horse brought in OCTAVIA *following.*

Pall. What dolefull noise is this?

Agrippina

Ay mee, I feare.

Octavia.

Oh dismall day! Oh wretched family!
Fly back bright *Phœbus* to the Easterne shore,
Or hide thy head; thou hast at Rome beheld
A feast more black then ere Mycenæ saw.
Ah dearest brother, sweet *Britannicus*.

Agrip-

Agrippina.

Britannicus.

Octavia.

Murder'd *Britannicus*,
Poison'd at *Nero's* table.

Agrippina

Breake my heart
The greatest woe, that could befall, is come.
Forgive mee, gentle Soule, twas I that gave
That viper life, and rule to ruin thee.
Thou need'st not curse mee; the impiety
Of him that kill'd thee, will revenge thy death.

Pallas

Faire hope of *Rome*, sweet flower untimely crop,
What parentasion shall sad *Pallas* make
T'appease thy wronged ghost, and expiate
My foule offences? to the King and Queene
Of sable night I'll build two grassey altars;
And yeerely there, if any yeeres at all
I have to live. with sad libations
Invoke the manes of *Britannicus*,
Thou from the groves of faire Elysium
For ever wail'd for ever honour'd Prince,
Deigne to accept my humble sacrifice.
Or if those rights bee too too meane for thee,
Perchance the Genius of afflicted *Rome*
Shall weep hereafter ore thy grave, and waile
Th' untimely death of her *Britannicus*.

Agrippina.

Gentle to thee let earth and water prove.

Exit Octavia,

This wofull murder of *Britannicus*.

& suum.

Bodes ill to mee, and my presaging soule
Is fill'd with ghastly feares. Ah *Pallas*, *Pallas*,
This is the entrance into Paricide;

And

And but the Prologue to a mothers death.

Pallas.

Would I could speake to your destresse and feares
A true and reall comfort, such a one
As might not flatter your estate, and make
You weaker then before, by taking from you
All study of prevention.

Servant.

Servant.

Cæsar. Madam,
Is come to visit you.

Agrippina.

Pallas farewell. *Enter Nero.*

Nero.

What weeping Madam? what unworthy cause
Dares force a teare from greate *Augustus* eye
While *Nero* lives? if 't bee my brother's death,
That caus'd this sorrow, I could joyne in teares
Had not that tragedy already rob'd
Mine eyes of moysture,

Agrippina.

This hypocrisie
Makes mee lesse trust his nature then before.

Nero.

The Gods have rob'd mee of one comfort now
The fellowship of sweet *Britannicus*,
That all my piety may bee confin'd
To you, deare mother, you containe alone
Within a Parents sacred name, all stiles
Of kindred now, all bonds of pious love.
Feare not a change in mee.

Agrippina.

I do not *Cæsar.*

Nero.

Minervas feast is celebrated now

Xiphilin.

Five

Nero.

Minervaes feast is celebrated now
Five dayes at Baiæ: thither you shall go
And feast with mee deare mother, there forget
All jealous feares, and you shall never more
Complaine of *Nero*. If the stratagem
Of *Anicetus* prosper, her complaints
Shall be to *Pluto*, and the Ghosts below.

Xiphilin.

aside.

exeunt.

OTHO *with his Commission.*

Otho.

The Gonernment of *Lusitania*.
By *Nero's* grace and favor is bestow'd
On mee! Oh glorious name of banishment!
Yet welcome now, since faire *Poppæa's* lost.
I thanke thee, *Nero*, thou provid'st a brave
And honourable cure for that bad wound
Thou hast inflicted on my love-sicke Soule.
How great a torture had it been to mee
To live in *Rome* divorc'd from her, and see
That beauty fotded in another's armes!
Hence wanton thoughts; fond love for ever vanish,
Collect my soule what ere thou hast within thee
Of Roman left, and answer to the call
Bright honour makes, some favourable God
Pittying the lusts and riots of a youth
So much misled, has sent this seeming losse
To wake me from so base a lethargy,
Employ'd in forreigne action, I shall live
Free from the infectious vices of this Court,
And farre from seeing the abhorr'd effects
Of future tyranny, which needs must breake
From *Nero's* vicious nature. At my birth
The Augures promis'd high and glorious hopes.
This is the way to bring them. Spaine shall find
Another *Otho* then was sent from *Rome*.
Poppæa promis'd here to meete, and take

Her last leave of mee. why should I againe
Renue my passion by the sight of her?
But't is but one poore look. and so farewell.

Enter SELEUCUS.

Seleucus.

Haile *Marcus Otho* Emperour of *Rome*,
Cæsar that shall bee.

Otho.

Ha!

Seleucus.

It is thy fate,
Which shall not bee prevented.

Otho.

Tell mee father
(For your predictions ever have been true)
Shall I behold *Poppaeas* face againe,
When I have left the City?

Seleucus.

Never more. *Exit Seleucus.*

Otho.

Never! a heavy doome yet I in lieu
Of her shall gaine the Empire of the world.
Juno will heale the wounds that *Venus* gives.

Enter POPPÆA.

See, there shee comes; her beauty waxes still,
Or elſe the sad conceit of never more
Seeing that face, makes it appeare more faire.
How dull the edge of Honour growes already!
Here could I stay, and like the Troian Prince
Lockt in faire *Didoes* armes forget for ever
Th' *Italian* land, and all my future fame.
Him Jove admonish'd to depart from thence.
Mee the command of *Cæsar* forces hence,
And leaves no power in my election.
Farewell *Poppæa*.

Pop.

Poppæa.

Oh hard fate in love
Is mine, whose joyes were never lasting yet.
Speake not so soone that killing word farewell.

Otho.

What gaine, alas, can one small minute bee?
Or if twere gaine to mee, to the *Poppæa*
Twere losse to keepe thee from thy *Cæsars* sight.
Hee is thy servant, whom the world obeyes.

Poppæa.

Ah *Otho*, love can witnesse that this fortune
Was never sought by mee.

Otho.

Thou wert too great
A treasure for a privat man to keep.
No; live still happy with thy *Cæsar* here
And grant mee one requeſt; if of that love
Which once wee vow'd so deare, there yet remaines
So small a part as may deserve the name
Of comon frendship, use thy power with *Cæsar*
My goverment may be continu'd long.

Poppæa.

Rather let mee intreate the contrary,
And keepe thee here at *Rome*.

Otho.

It must not bee.
Never while *Nero* lives, and lives with thee.
It must bee love no more, but frendship now
Twixt us *Poppæa*, which may still bee kept
In absence by good wishes, and without
Those nearer comforts which fond love requires.
But who shall teach mee to forget that sweet
Delicious lesson which loves schoole did teach,
When thy admired beauty was the booke,
And I a Scholler too too forward then?
Oh would great *Cæsars* power to cure my wound,

Could but bestow so privative a good
As losse of memory. but that, alas,
Were too unjust a curse, and I could wish
Rather to suffer still then quite forget
That I was once *Poppæas* envi'd love.
I'll rather strive to solace my sick soul
With contemplation of past happinesse,
And by recounting ore our former joyes
Deceive those houres of sorrow I must passe.
Pop. And I for comfort of our absent love
Will cherish hopes that we shall meet againe.
Oth. No, thinke mee dead, bright love, and I'll enforce
My imagination to believe that thou
Translated by some amorous Deity
Hast left the earth to beautify the sky,
And turne *Orbit* another in love, to finde
Thy figure out among those radiant lights
Which *Jove* transformed Paramours have made.
'Mongst those I'll seek for faire *Poppæas* flame,
And sweare I see it, rather then believe
Thou liv'st on earth debarr'd from *Otho's* sight.
I must begin to part, I see, for thou
In modesty art loath to chide mee hence,
And bid mee quit the place. Farewell *Poppæa*.
Such height of happinesse may'st thou enjoy
As *Cæsars* constant love can bring to thee.
Pop. As much good fortune follow *Otho* still
Tis power that parts us all the Gods can tell *Exit Otho*
How well I love thee *Otho*. but those Gods,
That have ordain'd another fate for mee
Must bee obey'd yet *Nero* must bee wrought
With cunning to my ends, or else my fortune
Is low and poore, my title nought at all.
Tis not the love of *Cæsar*, but the honour,
And that high stride which attends his love
That is *Poppæas* aime, *O Rome*

Debarres

Debarres mee yet from that, and *Agrippina*
Is fierce, and keeps her sonne in Pupillage.

Enter NERO.

Nero.

Now faire *Poppæa*, thou art mine alone;
Otho's remov'd, embrace the happy change
That fortune brings thee, thou hast found instead
Of him, a *Cæsar*, who besides his state
Has brought a heart as true to thee, and love
As strong and fervent as poore *Otho's* was
Thou wert before a diamond coarsly set,
A clouded starre. the Fates did pitty thee,
And would no longer let that beauty ly
Ecclipsed in a private family
No seat but *Romes* Imperiall throne, no sphære
But *Cæsars* armes were fit for these bright eyes
To shine in, and the subject world t' adore
Their lustre, like some constellation
New risen to amaze mortality.
Not *Rome* alone, but all the farthest shores
That *Peleus* silver-footed wife ere knew
Shall call *Poppæa* mistresse.

Poppæa.

Those are honours
Cæsar, too high, too great for mee to hope.

Nero

To hope, my love, they are thine owne already.

Poppæa.

Cæsar, thou know'st it cannot bee; and I
That might have liv'd content with *Otho's* love;
And there enjoy'd the honour'd name of wife,
Must in the Palace find a baser stile.

Nero.

Thou wrong'st my power, *Poppæa*, if thou thinke
I cannot give the highest stile to thee:
And if thou thinke I meane it not, thou wrong'st

My truest love

Poppea.

Octavia is alive
No love of thine can heare *Augustus* state
But onely shee

Nero.

Shee shall bee soone remov'd
To make a roome for faire *Poppaea* honour.
Nor will the *Senate* dare to grumble at it.

Poppea.

Though all were silent else, heere *Agrippina* *Xiphilin.*
Would in that act controll thee, and thinke mee
To meane for *Cæsars* wife, though I am sprung
(For I may speake a truth that *Rome* can witnesse)
From noble and triumphant Ancestors.

Nero.

There, love, thou strik'st upon the truest string
That *Agrippina* was my greatest feare,
Though now shee is not; for I'll tell it thee,
If *Anicetus* Stratagems have taken,
Ere this shee wanders on the Stygian shore.
Weary I was of her imperious pride,
And fear'd her cruell plots. How that succeedes
Is now my greatest expectation.
Nor do I live till *Anicetus* come
And bring my safety in that womans death

Enter ANICETUS.

Poppea.

See, *Anicetus* is return'd

Nero.

Speake man
What is my fate? thou carriest in thy voyce
The life and death of *Cæsar*

Anicetus

Your command
Was done, great *Cæsar*, but your mother scap'd.

Nero.

Nero.

Escap'd? how could it bee, but you were false,
And all conspir'd together to betray
My life in saving hers? how could shee scape?

Anicetus. *Xiphilin.*

Wee chose the night to act it in, but night,
Prov'd not so black as night; the stars gave light,
No wind at all blew as wee lanched forth
Down in the Galley *Agrippina* lay,
And at her feet lay *Aceronia*
With joy discoursing of your curtesie,
And favour lately shew'd her, but when I
The watch-word gave, the cursing of the place
Loaden with lead fell downe, and preest to death
Her servant *Gallus*. But when th' other part
By fortune stronger, broke not, nor the vessell
Was loos'd asunder, all beeing in amaze
The rowers straitway thought it best to weigh,
The galley at one side, and sinket so
There *Aceronia* floating in the waves
Faining her selfe to bee the Empresse, cry'd
Helpe, helpe the Prince his mother. But the rowers
With poles, and ours straight kill'd her as shee swamm,
But *Agrippina* in a silence cam'd
By policy or feare, swamm to the banke,
Having received but one wound, and there
Succour'd by little barkes, through *Lucrine* lake
To her owne house was carryed at the last.

Nero.

Oh, I am lost and dead; I shall bee straight
Surpris'd and kill'd; shee'l arme her slaves, and stirre
The souldiers up, or to the Senate-house
Complaine, and shew the wound shee has receiv'd
And tell the story there. What shall I doo?
Advise mee, my *Poppæa*, *Aniceius*,
But yet advise mee nothing but her death,

Xiphilin.

Nero. No

No other course is safe, *Nero* must dy
If *Agrippina.* live, call *Burrhus* to mee;
Send forth the souldiers to dispach her straight.

Poppæa.

It is no action for a souldiers hand
Nor will the campe for brave *Germanicus*,
Her father's sake bee drawne to butcher her
Let *Anicetus.* finish the exploit
Hee has begunne.

Nero.

It must be so; go on
With thy religious act, good *Anicetus.*
Thou art obleig'd to finish it; or else
What thou hast done already, will procure
My ruine rather then security
Choose thee what aide thou wilt.

Anicetus.

I have them ready.
Feare it not *Cæsar*, *Agrippinaes* dead.

Nero.

Oh comfortable voice! thou art the man
Thou only *Anicetus*, that bestow'st
The Empire upon *Nero.* to thy guift:
I will acknowlegd it, and celebrate
This as my day of coronation.
What plot shall wee invent to hide the deede,
And put th' intent of murder upon her?
To bring you newes of her escape, I'll finde
A way to doo't, tis strange none yet come from her.
See *Agerinus* comes *Enter Agerinus.*

Agerinus.

All health to *Cæsar*
Augusta by the favour of the Gods
Has lately scap'd a strange and wounderfull
Danger at Sea.

Ani. Cæsar when any of her servants come.

What

What meanes this ponyard *Anicetus* let's fall a ponyard
In *Cæsars* presence, *Agerinus*? *behinde Agerinus.*

Nero.

Treason. *Ziphilin.*
Shee sends to murder mee; dragge hence the slave,
And torture him to death.

Agerinus.

I am as free
From guilt in this as innocence it selfe.

Nero.

Hence with the villaine to his death, and thou
Deare *Anicetus* forward with thy plot. *Exeunt*

AGRIPPINA, *brought in by Menester, and* Seleucus. *Shee sits.*

Agrippina.

Leave mee alone; but bee not farre from mee. *Exeunt.*
Who would rely upon the gratitude
Of men? or trust the fruit of benefits,
That now behold, or shall hereafter reade
My wofull fortune? I, that have bestow'd
What ere the world containes, to bee possest
By impious *Nero*, in reward, expect
Nothing but bloody death: was too too true
That strange deceitfull galley was a plot
An impious engine made to murder mee,
As by the fiercenesse of the slaves, my wound,
And *Acerronias* death it did appeare.
Can I expect that *Nero* should relent?
Or that the tyrant in a brothers blood
Imbrew'd already, should not rather thinke
No mischeife can bee safe till fully done?
Oh had his thoughts beene good, had my escape
Beene gratefull to him, all the house ere this
With visitants, and clients had been fill'd
To aske and see how *Cæsars* mother did
Where now are all the hailes the bended knees,

Low

Low proſtrate faces, and officious tongues,
That ſtrove in honoring *Agrippinas* name?
Vaniſh'd alas, and nought but ſolitude,
Ill-boding ſilence, and neglect remaine
In this forſaken Palace. But too ſoone
Ay mee, I feare the approach of vilany.
What noiſe is that at doore! where are my ſervants?
Mneſter, Seleucus, Galla, Xenophon.
No anſwer made! are they departed too!
Then vaniſh all my hopes falſe world farewell,
With all thy fading glories. But alas,
Whither from hence ſhall *Agrippina* fly?
What regions are there in the other world
But my injuſtice has already fill'd
With wronged Ghoſts? there young *Silanus* wanders
Lollia Paulina and great *Claudius*
My murdred Lord, yet thoſe ſad ſpirits perchance
Abhorring *Nero's* baſe ingratitude,
And glutted with revenge, will ceaſe to hate
At laſt, and pitty *Agrippinas* ſtate.

Enter ANICETUS, OLOARITUS, *and others*

Ay mee, is *Anicetus.* come againe?
Then I am dead paſt hope, murder, helpe. help *Xiphilin*

Anicetus.

You gueſſe our buſineſſe right but tis in vaine
To call for helpe, your guards are farre enough.

Agrippina.

Oh hold your hands a while; heare mee but ſpeake
Conſider with your ſelves before you act
A deed ſo execrable as will ſtick
A laſting brand on your abhorred names.
This murder will bee famous through the world.
All men will fly your hated company.
Like birds of night ſhall you for ever hide
Youre guilty heads; or, which is worſe then that,
Nero himſelfe, who did command the deede,

(As you pretend) ſhall guerdon you with death,
And quit himſelfe by puniſhing of you.
O rather venter *Neros* frowne, and keepe
Your innocence.

Anicetus.

Can they bee innocent,
That diſobey their Prince his will?

Agrippina

But ſure
You did miſtake the Prince. I am his mother.
Twas I that gave him birth; nay more, that put
Into his hand the ſcepter of the world.
Could hee command my death?

Anicetus

Wee did not ſtand
Examining the cauſe.

Agrippina.

Then ſtrike this wombe
This tragicall, and ever curſed wombe,
That to the ruine of mankinde brought forth *Xiphilin.*
That monſter *Nero*, here, here take revenge.
Here Juſtice bids you ſtrike. let theſe ſad wounds
Serve to appeaſe the hatred of the earth
Gainſt *Agrippina* for dire *Nero's* birth.

ſhee dyes.

FINIS.

TWO TRAGEDIES

Viz.

CLEOPATRA

Queene of Ægypt.

AND

AGRIPPINA

Empress of *Rome*.



Written by

THOMAS MAY, *Esq;*

LONDON,

Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and are to be sold at his Shop at the *Princes Armes* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard.

1654.

THE TRAGEDIE OF *JULIA AGRIPPINA*;

Written by

THOMAS MAY, *Esq*;





LONDON,
Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and are to be sold at his Shop at the *Princes Armes* in St. *Pauls* Churchyard. 1654.

TO THE MOST ACCOMPLISH'D Sr. Kenelme Digby.

Sr.

THat it pleased you to cast an eye of favour upon these poor Plays has given me the boldnesse, not only to publish them (which I thought not to have done) but to shelter them, though most unworthy, under that name, to which for authority and approbation the richest pieces that this nation can boast, might be proud to flie. You are to learning what learning is to others a gracefull ornament; and known not only able to receive, but fit to make that which we call literature; it being nothing else but rules and observations drawne at the first from such able natures as yours is; and by your daily conversation is better expressed, then wee by writing can define it. Your composition was made to justifie those old Philosophers who resembled a man to the whole world. For as in the world

all varieties do meet to make a perfect harmony: so in the largeness of your soule the severall abilities of most different Nations are conjoyned to an honourable advantage of one entire temper, where the predominancies are magnanimity, prudence, and gentleneſſe. But I dare not offer to crowd into a narrow Epiſtle your noble Character, which will require a longer Treatiſe and a better pen. For the defects in theſe two Plays, I that have already been ſo much obliged to your goodneſſe in other matters, cannot here deſpaire of your forgiveneſſe, which is the only thing that puts confidence into

Your moſt obliged and
devoted ſervant

Tho. May.

The Speakers.

Claudius Cæſar.
Nero Cæſar.
Britannicus.
Seneca.
Burrhus.
Vitellius.
Pollio.
Criſpinus.
Geta.
Otho.
Montanus.
Petronius.
Pallas.
Narciſſus.
Anicetus.

Agrippinâ.
Octavia.
Poppæa.
Fulvia.
Acte.
Locuſta.
L.

ACTED 1628.

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Imprimatur,

MATTH. CLAY.

MEGÆRA *aſcends.*

Megæra.

THus to the Romane *Palace, as our home*
And proper manſion, is Megæra *come*
No ſtranger to theſe walls: not more in Hell
Then here, doe miſchiefs, and we Furies dwell
Let the unenvy'd Gods henceforth poſſeſſe
Poore Peaſants hearts, and rule in Cottages;
Let Vertue lurke among the ruraall Swaines,
Whileſt Vice in Romes *Imperiall Palace reignes,*
And rules thoſe breaſts, whom all the world obeys.
What though the Gods and Vertue firſt did raiſe
Rome *to that height it holds? they did but make*
An Empire large enough for us to take,
And build a ſtrength for us to manage now,
Though Vertue made the Romane greatneſſe grow:
Shee now forſakes it at the height: the Powers,
And fruits of all her diligence are ours.
But to preſerve that intereſt, and keep high
Our hold in this commanding family,
A blacker Fury then my ſelfe muſt riſe,
To fill theſe roofes with freſh Impieties.
Riſe cruell Ghoſt, aſcend Caligula,
That lately didſt the worlds proud ſcepter ſway
Beyond our wiſh; who though an Emperour,
In wickedneſſe wer't greater then in power;
And cloth'd with fleſh among mankind did'ſt dwell
A Fiend more black then any was in Hell.

From those darke vaults ascend ; to blast this faire
And gorgious Palace, like that poisonous aire,
Which Earth-quakes from the grounds torne entrailes breath
To fill the world with pestilence and death.
Hee comes; Hee comes : the very house begins
To shake with horrour of approching sinnes.
The night growes blacker then before, and I
My selfe am fill'd with new Impiety.

CALIGULA'S Ghost.

Why am I raised from the vaults below ?
What mischiefs can an aëry shadow doe ?
What can a naked Ghost performe ? In vain
Are all intents, unlesse I reign'd againe
Obey'd by all the Romane power, and wore
That wicked body which I had before.
What then I did you know, and if your power
Could have maintain'd me longer Emperour,
I had outdone your wishes, and given birth
To such new mischiefes, as the suffring earth
Had groan'd to feele : what my intentions were
Did to the world in those black bookes appeare,
When all Romes Senate were to death design'd,
And chests of poison that I left behind,
Which since my death into the Ocean throwne,
Poison'd the waves for many leagues, and on
Poore fishes wrought that execution,
Which on mankind I ment they should have done
What can I now performe alas ?

MEGÆRA. *Enough.*

With thy contagious presence blast this house ;
Infect th' Imperiall House with all the ill
That Hell and thou canst bring. Let mischiefe dwell
Reigne here, and keep out banish'd Pietie,
Iustice, and Conscience ; let no sacred tie
Of Nature, or Religious lawes restraine
*Their Parricidall hands : all names bee vaine

Of brother, childe, or parent. let the wife
With impious rage destroy her husbands life,
The brother kill the brother, and the Sonne
Rip up his parents bowels.

GHOST.

'Twill be done.
The actors are my kindred, and like mine
Must play their parts: ambitious Agrippine,
Pursue thy cruell projects, and upon
A husband's murther raise thy Impious Sonne,
That he may play the Parricide againe,
And murder thee, that gav'st him life and reigne.
That all the world astonish'd at so high
Ingratitude and foule Impiety,
May feare the Monsters reigne, yet suffer more
Then they could feare, or ere was felt before.
Let what no foes, no furies durst conspire
To act 'gainst Rome, *nor I my selfe desire*
When I was Prince; bee curs'd Nero *'s crimes.*
Let his dire story in succeeding times
From all earths Tyrants elfe the wonder draw,
And men almost forget Caligula.

MEGÆRA.

The Fates consent; that thunder, which wee heare
From Acheron, *confirmes the Omen there.*
Downe wicked Ghost into thy cell below,
Wee must no longer bide; the Cocks doe crow,
The twinkling starres begin to hide their heads
The day would dawne, and from Auroraes *bed*
Would Titan *rise, but that he feares to see*
Such instruments of Hells impiety.
The Gods themselves forbid our longer stay,
For feare our presence should retard the day. Exeunt.

A Tragedy.

ACT. I. SCEN. I.

PALLAS, VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Pallas.

NOw is't time noble *Vitellius*,
For you, and you moſt honour'd *Pollio*,
To make that ſervice you have done com-
To royall *Agrippina*, briefly thus: (plete
The two commanders o'th' Prætorian
Criſpinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta* (campe
Muſt be diſplac'd, and ſome of neerer truſt
To her deſignes advanced in their roome,
Or elſe our power will nere be full, they love
Britannicus too well, this is the thing
The Empreſſe wiſhes; let your eloquence
And wiſdome further it in *Cæſar's* eare.

Vitelli.

Feare us not *Pallas*; but what ſucceſſors
Have we to take their charge?

Pallas.

One muſt take all.

You

You may pretend the inconvenience
Of two commanders, and so take from *Cæsar*
All jealousie of the plot.

Pollio.

Who shall it be?

Pallas.

Burrhus Afranius a wise valiant man,
Belov'd and honour'd by the souldiers.
None can except against him, and the change
Will not displease the campe: nor can his merit
Make him lesse thankfull to her; knowing well,
'Twas in her power to make it otherwise.
But the advancing of such able men
As *Seneca* and *Burrhus* will take off
All envy from the Empresse and our selves.
Then wee with praise have wrought our purposes,
And made our party strong, while *Seneca*
Shall sway the Senate, *Burrhus* rule the campe
To her designes: but I'le presume no further
T'instruct your wisedomes, or much lesse to doubt
Your true affections to the state and honour
Of *Agrippina*, who will then have power
To make more large requitall to her friends,
In which most high and happy ranke, you two
Are chiefly seated: thee acknowledges
Her selfe indebted to your eloquence
Noble *Vitellius*, who in Senate lately
You proov'd her marriage lawfull, and being Censor,
Depos'd *Silanus* from his Prætorship,
Who should have married young *Octavia*.
To you, brave *Pollio*, whose perswasions
Have beene the cause young *Nero* now enjoyes
That happy marriage, which *Silanus* lost.
But most of all shee ow'd to both your paines
In causing *Cæsar* to adopt her *Nero*.

Vitellius

Vitellius.

'Twas hard to worke at first. *Cæsar* stuck at it,
Alledging, that the *Claudian* family
Never adopted any, and besides
When *Lucius Geta* and *Crispinus Rufus*
In love they bore to young *Britannicus*
Told him that that adoption to the world
Would bee ridiculous: by president
Wee did refute it, shewing how *Tiberius*
Having a Sonne and Nephew both alive,
Adopted th' issue of *Germanicus*.

Pallas.

My Lords, 'twas nobly carryed; this designe
That now wee have in hand, though not so hard
To worke, will prove as advantageous.
Bee you with *Cæsar*; I'le goe satisfie
The Empresse of your loves.

Vitellius. Pollio.

Farewell brave *Pallas*. *Exeunt Vitel. & Pol.*

Pallas.

Farewell my Lords. Goe flattering Senatours,
Goe use your best perswasive eloquence,
Whilest I alone upon your envie rise,
Whilest I injoy in *Agrippinaes* love
The fruit of your obsequious diligence.
What though my birth be humble, and my stile
But one of *Cæsars* freed-men, though I boast not
Patritian blood, nor in my galleries
Display old ranks of nose-lesse ancestours,
Or eare-cropt images, if I enjoy
What ever high Nobility can give
Respect and power: the state can witnesse it.
The Senate feare mee, and in flattery
Have su'd to *Cæsar* to conferre on mee
Prætorian and Quæstorian ornaments.
Which I at last vouchsafed to accept.

When

When my command alone has doom'd to death
The nobleſt of that order; men whoſe names
Old *Rome* has boaſted of, whoſe vertues rais'd
Her to that envi'd height that now ſhe holds.
Their murders ſtupid *Cæſar* rather choſe
To take upon himſelfe, then queſtion mee.
Let dull Patricians boaſt their aëry titles,
And count me baſe, whileſt I commend their lives,
And for the furtherance of my high intents,
Make nobleſt men my hated inſtruments.

Enter NARCISSUS.

But ha! *Narciſſus?* yes; there comes a man
That was my rivall once, whom I fear'd more
Then all the Lords of *Rome*, my fellow free'd man,
That knew our wayes of power; that not the Senate,
But *Cæſars* chamber did command the world,
And rule the fate of men: but Fortune 's turn'd,
And he not worth my regard or feare.
In maſtring him I feele my greateſt ſtrength *exit.*

Narciſſus.

Not looke upon mee! am I fall'n ſo low?
Did I in equall place with this proud man,
Nay farre above him, ſway the ſtate, and rule
Great *Cæſar's* heart, while *Meſſallina* liv'd,
And was not there content (Oh puniſhment
Of my ambitious aimes) but cauſ'd the death
Of that looſe Empreſſe to bring in th' expulſt
Aelia Petina, and inſtead of her
Have let this Tygreſſe *Agrippina* in
This dragon ſpirit to devour us all
Except proud *Pallas* her adulterer?
What unavoided dangers every way
Threaten this life? For if young *Nero* reigne,
I dye, that ſought to croſſe his mothers match:
If ere *Britannicus* do reigne, I dye
That cauſ'd his mothers death. What ſhall I doo?

Where

Where shall I leane for safety? better trust
The innocent goodnesse of *Britannicus*
Then *Agrippinaes* fierce and cruell nature;
Nor can I hope more goodnesse from her sonne.
That may give longer respite to my feare.
Besides it beares the greater shew of justice,
And honest service to my Roiall Master.
Since wee must fall, it is some happinesse
To fall the honest way, if wee may call
That honesty at all, or reall vertue
To which necessity enforces us,
And wee by fortune not election practise.

Enter GETA, CRISPINUS.

Here comes two freinds of young *Britannicus*
Haile *Lucius Geta*, haile *Crispinus Rufus*.

Geta. Narcissus haile.

Narcissus,
Brave *Romans* your are come
Fitly to ease my overburden'd breast
Of weighty thoughts, which I dare freely trust
Vnto your noble eares.

Geta.
You may *Narcissus*
Trust truth with us.

Crispinus.
Or any honest secret.

Geta.
What is 't you would with us?

Narcissus.
You know my Lords,
(And I must needs confesse) I was a meanes
Of *Messalinaes* death; but all the Gods
Can witnesse with mee how unwillingly
I lent a hand to that sad action;
And but for *Cæsar's* safety, which I prize
Above my life and fortunes, and which then

I thought

I thought endanger'd much by her hold act,
Nought in the world could ere have moov'd mee to it.

Crispinus.

What hence would you inferre?

Narcissus.

Then Know my Lords,
How little I respect my private ends
To doe the publike service, and can loose
My selfe for *Cæsars* good: it may be thought
When the most hopefull Prince *Britannicus*
Shall weare that wreath which all the world adores,
To me it may be fatall, as a foe
Vnto his mother: but I rather wish
My selfe for ever lost, then that brave Prince
Should not succeed his father.

Geta.

How! succeed?
What feare is there of that?

Crispinus.

What power on earth,
Can barre his right, whilest wee command the campe?
I'de rather see (which all the Gods avert)
Rome rent againe with civill broiles, then hee
Should loose unjustly the Imperiall throne.

Narcissus.

Y'are true and Noble friends; and here I vow
To joyne with you, and use my uttermost power
T'advance the honour of *Britannicus*.

Crispinus.

What danger threatens it?

Narcissus.

Doe you not know
To whom the Sonne of *Agrippina's* married?

Crispinus. Yes.

Narcissus.

And that honor were enough for him.

Without

Without adoption too, were his aimes private,
And that his crafty Mother did not caſt
Away for him to the ſucceſſion.

Criſpinus.

Twas ſtrangely done of *Cæſar* I confeſſe.

Narciſſus.

They make the faction ſtrong, and cunningly
Encreaſe the traine of *Nero*, and diſplace
The faithfull ſervants af *Britannicus*.
Wiſe *Seneca 's* recall'd from baniſhment
By *Agrippinaes* meanes, not for the love
Shee beares his vertue; but to make him hers,
That *Seneca 's* authority may gaine
The peoples love to her ambitious ſonne,
Of whoſe young yeares hee takes tuition.

Criſpinus. I think no leſſe.

Geta. Beſides to make the match
For her young *Nero* with *Octavia*.
Noble *Silanus* dy'd, who might have proov'd
A faithfull prop to *Claudius* family.

Narciſſus.

In blood that fatall marriage was begun,
I feare the Omen; *Agrippina's* feirce
And cruell nature has too much been ſeene
In this ſhort time. *Lellia Paulina*, Neece
To *Cotta Meſſalinus*, and late wife
To *Caius Cæſar*, for no other cauſe
Then aiming once at *Claudius* marriage
Is baniſh'd *Italy*; her goods are ſeiz'd,
And but five millions of Seſterces left her
Of all her great eſtate; but there the malice
Of this fell woman ſtayes not: now wee heare
A *Tribune* is diſpatch'd away, to kill
The baniſh'd Lady, and bring back her head.

Criſpinus.

Oh barbarous cruelty!

Narciſſus.

Narciſſus.

Yet more I feare,
Since her *Domitius* is adopted now.
I feare ſhee 'll ſhortly aime at higher blood.

Geta.

Wee 'll guard the life of young *Britannicus.*

Narciſſus.

And I 'll be vigilant for *Cæſar* 's ſafety.
When all her ends are wrought, his death is next.

Enter BRITANNICUS.

Geta.

Here comes the youthfull hope of *Rome* and us.

Britannicus.

Tell mee, my *friends*, am not I *Cæſar* 's ſonne?

Criſpinus.

My Lord, who dares to queſtion it?

Britannicus.

I 'm ſure,
I was his eldeſt ſonne, and whileſt I liv'd
I thought that *Cæſar* had not lack'd an heire
But I at laſt have found an elder brother,
Domitius is adopted *Cæſar's* ſonne
His name is *Nero* now. I cannot tell
What is my fault.

Geta.

Excellent youth, how much
Beyond his yeeres hee apprehends his wrongs?

Criſpinus.

Feare not ſweet Prince, though *Agrippinas* ſonne
Bee two yeere elder then your ſelfe, the Senate
Will never judge that an adopted Sonne
Shall in ſucceſſion bee preferr'd before
The true and naturall heire.

Britannicus.

You ever lov'd mee,
Pray doe ſo ſtill.

Geta

While wee have breath, my Lord,
you shall command our lives.

Crispinus

How unawares
Has feeble *Cæsar* wrought a snare to catch
His own unhappy life in! grow sweet prince,
Grow up to strengthen the Imperiall house,
And Curbe the furious malice of thy foes.

Enter NERO, PALLAS.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* haile.

Britannicus.

Haile to you
Domitius Anobarbus.

Nero.

Doe you scorne
My salutation, or not know my name?

Britannicus.

That was your fathers name; and why not yours?

Nero.

How 's that? Proud boy. *Exeunt Brit. & reliqui.*

Pallas.

Well, let them goe, my Lord.
'Twas not the braine of young *Britannicus*
That could give birth to this minurious scorne,
Though for his yeeres, the boy be capable.
But riper heads then his: there went his counsell
Crispinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta*,
Who swell the youth with boasting hopes, and thinke
Their power can give protection to his pride.
I'le make them see their errour, and perceive,
One breath of mine can blow them from their strengths.
This newes I 'll beare to *Agrippina* straight.
Come Prince; *Britannicus* shall find anon
What feeble props his pride has lean 'd upon. *Exeunt.*

AGRIP.

Geta

AGRIPPINA, SENECA, VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Agrippina.

You are my Judges.

Seneca.

Your poore ſervants, Madam.

Agrippina.

Nay that muſt be your office; you have read
My Commentaries over, and I looke for
A faithfull cenſure: I am ſure, my Lords,
You have both learning able to diſcerne,
And ſuch integritie as will not flatter.
Speake *Seneca*; I ſee they looke on you:
How doe you like them?

Seneca. Royall *Agrippina*,
Such, and ſo good they bee, that ableſt men
May boldly ſpeake, and not offend the truth,
Nor you at all; the ſtile is full and Princely.

Vitellius.

Stately and abſolute, beyond what eye
Theſe eyes have ſeene; and *Rome*, whoſe majeſtie
Is there deſcrib'd, in after times ſhall owe
For her memoriall to your learned pen,
More then to all thoſe fading monuments
Built with the riches of the ſpoiled world.
When ruſt ſhall eate her braſſe, when times ſtrong hand
Shall bruiſe to duſt her marble Palaces,
Triumphall Arches, Pillars, Obeliskes,
When *Julius* Temple, *Claudius* Aquæducts,
Agrippa's Baths, and *Pompey's* Theater,
Nay *Rome* it ſelfe ſhall not be found at all,
Hiſtorians books ſhall live; thoſe ſtrong records,
Thoſe deathleſſe monuments alone ſhall ſhew
What, and how great the *Roman* Empire was.

Pollio.

The act is Noble; not the preſent world

Alone

Alone ſhall owe to *Agrippinaes* worth
(As for her gratious government it does)
But future ages ſhall acknowledge more
To the rich labours of her Royall pen.

Agrippina.

The wiſeſt Princes never ſought to raiſe
Their preſent ſtate alone, but to preſerve
Themſelves immortall by an endleſſe fame.
For memory of mee, beſides theſe bookes,
If that our Augures faile not in their skill,
Or flatter not, that *German* Colony,
Which I of late deducted o're the *Rhine*
To *Ulium*, for evermore the name
Of *Agrippinaes* Colony ſhall beare.

Vitellius.

That act, though great, declares your power alone,
Your wealth and greatneſſe: but theſe learned bookes
Expreſſe your wiſedome, and for theſe you owe
Nothing at all to Fortune.

Agrippina.

Thus I meane
To ſpend all time which from affaires of ſtate,
And buſineſſe of our Empire can be ſpar'd.

Seneca.

Is ſhe already turn'd our Emperour?

Agrippina.

Thoſe wretches have too narrow ſoules, who thinke
That perſons great and eminent in ſtate
Can ſpare no time to purchaſe fame by writing,
But what they ſteale from action and imployment,
As if no mind were large enough for both.
Who was more full of action, and more fit
To rule, nay rule the world, then *Julius Cæſar*?
Yet he was of mey mind.

Seneca.

Oh ſtrange male ſpirit!
Can there be found no other parallell

A ſtile ſo ſtrong, naked, and beautifull,
Free from affected words, and from all gloſſe
Or dreſſe of Oratory, as in ſtead
Of leading others in a way to write,
It quite diſcourages the ableſt men.
So *Hirtius* thought, and that ſam'd *Cicero*,
The greateſt maſter of *Romes* eloquence.

Agrippina.

Are thoſe your authors then? that *Hirtius*
Was *Cæſars* ſervant partiall in his heart,
Or elſe hee flatter'd him; for *Cicero*,
They were ſo farre out of his tedious ſtraine,
Hee could not cenſure them.

Seneca.

Yet able men
Can truly cenſure of another ſtile
Then what themſelves have uſ'd.

Agrippina.

Hee was not able,
No, not in Oratory; had I rul'd
Rome and her Senate then, as now I doe,
Not all th' Orations that e're *Cicero*
Made in the Senate, ſhould have ſav'd one haire
Of an offendour, or condemn'd a Mouſe.

Vitellius.

How confident thee is in cenſuring!

Seneca.

I am amaz'd: but let her have her way.
Forgive my ſilence noble *Cicero*;
Here thy defence is vaine; but what I ſpare,
The tongues of all poſterity ſhall ſpeake.

Enter PALLAS, *Tribune.*

Pallas.

The Tribune, Madam, is return'd and brings
Lollia Paulinaes head.

Agrippina.

Let him come in.

Tribune.

Your pleasure, great *Augusta*, is perform'd.

Agrippina.

Let me peruse this face: ha! 'tis much chang'd.
Her teeth shall make me sure, they did not grow *Dio.*
The common way; I am confirm'd; 'tis shee.
Reward him *Pallas*.

Tribune.

The Gods preserve
Augusta Agrippina.

Agrippina.

O pale death,
Thou mock of beauty, and of greatnesse too:
Was this the face, that once in *Cæsar's* love
Was *Agrippinaes* rivall, and durst hope
As much 'gainst mee, as my unquestion'd power
Has wrought on her? Was this that beautie! once
That wore the riches of the world about it?
For whose attire, all lands, all seas were search'd,
All creatures rob'd? This! This was that *Paulina*,
Whom *Cajus Cæsar* serv'd, whom *Rome* ador'd
And the world feared.

Seneca.

Such a sight mee 'thinks
Should make her sadly thinke of humane frailty.

Agrippina.

Take hence the head, least in her death shee gaine
A greater conquest o're mee, then her life
Could ever doe, to make me shed a teare.
I would not wrong the justice I have done
So much as to lament it now: You know
My friends, shee had a spirit dangerous.
And though my nature could have pardon'd her,
Reason of State forbade it, which then told mee

Great

Great ruines have been wrought by foolish pity.

Seneca.

Would shee had such a nature! but 'tis now
Too late to give her counsell.

Pallas.

So let all
That dare contest with *Agrippina*, fall. *Enter servant.*

Servant.

Cæsar is come to visite you.

Agrippina.

Now friends,
Vitellius, *Pollio*, *Pallas* second mee.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTISTIUS.

Cæsar.

How fares my *Agrippina*?

Agrippina.

Wondrous well,
When I am blest with *Cæsars* company.

Cæsar.

That shall be oft, my love, when *Romes* affaires,
And publike businesse will give me leave.

Agrippina.

I would partake my selfe of those affaires.
Rather then want your presence

Pallas.

I beleeve it.

Cæsar.

Thou shalt; 'tis onely for thy dearest sake
I love my fortunes, thy sweet fellowship
Makes light the burthen of my government.

Agrippina.

To ease great *Cæsars* care, shall ever bee
The height of my desires: before you came
My heart was sad. I sent for these my friends
T' impart the reason to them.

Great ruines have been wrought by foolish pity.

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To impart the reason to them.

Cæsar.

Sad; for what?

Agrippina.

Weighing the troubles of a Princely state,
And all the dangers that still threaten it.

Cæsar.

Dangers!

Pallas.

Shee strikes upon the fittest string;
No passion reignes in him so much as feare.

Agrippina.

Wee were devising of the fittest meanes
To give your state security: you know
Your strongest guard is the Prætorian campe.

Cæsar.

Most true.

Agrippina.

That campe commanded now by two,
May be by Captaines too ambitious strife
Divided into factions, and so made
Lesse serviceable, should your safety need them.

Vitellius.

Cæsar remembers when that bold attempt
Of *Silius* was, how the Prætorian campe
Was by their generall strife in mutiny,
And had not one been chosen for that day
To rule them all, *Cæsar* had not been safe.

Pollio.

Wise men in calmes provide for stormes to come.
None knowes how dangerous the times may prove,
Though now the state be safe, and may the Gods
To *Cæsar's* honor long preserve it so.

Seneca.

What new designe is this, that all of them
Second so readily, and I was not
Acquainted with it? If 't prove mischievous,

I thanke the Empreſſe for my ignorance.

Agrippina.

Burrhus Afranius is a worthy man,
Fit for the place, and faithfull, well-belov'd
By all the ſouldiers: ſuch a change, my Lord,
None can except againſt: Let him take all.

Seneca.

What ere her ends may bee, this propoſition
For noble *Burrhus* ſake, I muſt approve.

Cæſar.

'Tis true, my love, I make no queſtion
Of *Burrhus* worth, and fitneſſe for the place:
But what offence have *Geta* and *Criſpinus*
Been e're accus'd of? Or what juſt ſuſpitions
Are there of them?

Agrippina.

I will not be unjuſt,
To accuſe guiltleſſe men, although I price
Thy ſafety, *Cæſar*, equall to my life.
I know no crimes of note they have committed.

Vitellius.

Cæſar, it is no loſſe to them at all;
They both have plentious fortunes to retire to.

Pollio.

And in ſo neere a cauſe, who dares examine
Great *Cæſar's* counſells, or enquire the reaſon?

Agrippina

Shall *Burrhus* have it *Cæſar*? ſpeake thy pleaſure.
Or if my care offend, I ſhall hereafter
Forbeare to meddle.

Cæſar.

No, ſweet *Agrippina*;
Since thou wilt have it ſo; goe *Pallas*, draw
The warrant ſtraight, and ſeale it in our name:
Let *Geta* and *Criſpinus* be remoov'd,
And *Burrhus* take poſſeſſion preſently.

This day, my love, the *Britane* prisoners
Sent from *Ostorius Scapula*, and late
Arriv'd at *Rome*, shall be in publike shew'd.
There thou shalt see that brave *Barbarian* Prince,
That bold *Caractacus*, whose stubborne spirit
So many yeares contemn'd the *Roman* power.
Hee now is taken.

Pollio.

'Twas a victory
Sent from the Gods to honor *Claudius* reigne.

Agrippina.

Had he been basely taken, or at first
Yeelded himselfe, as hee had got no honour,
But been forgotten in his fall, and nought
Had e're been mention'd of him but his death:
So had thy glory *Cæsar* been farre lesse.

Vitellius.

Not warre-like *Syphax* the *Numidian* King,
Stubborne *Jugurtha*, nor great *Perseus*
Ere brought to *Rome* by their captivity
More reall honour then this *Britane* Prince.

Cæsar.

Nor doe wee price our name *Brittannicus*
Fetch'd from that Iland, lesse then *Scipio*
His honour'd name of *Africanus* priz'd.

Pollio.

Thy stile, O *Cæsar*, is the greater farre
Drawne from the conquest of another world,
Which nature ment by enterposing cold
And stormy seas, to guard from Latian armes.

Vitellius.

Great *Julius Cæsar* did but only shew
That land to us, whose conquest was reserv'd
By heavens decree to honour *Claudius* name.

Agrippina.

Cæsar, let 's sit together; one Tribunall

Will

Will hold us both.

Cæſar.

It ſhall bee ſo, my love,
Thou, as my ſelfe, ſhalt pardon or condemne.

ACTUS II.

POPPÆA, OTHO.

Poppæa.

MY love, deare *Otho*, faine would bid thee ſtay:
But danger now forbids it, for my Lord
Returnes by this time homewards from the Pallace.

Otho.

Wee muſt obey the times neceſſity
Sweeteſt *Poppæa*, though I part from thee
With ſuch a ſad'neſſe as will looſe by all
Compariſons. and cannot bee expreſt
But by it ſelfe, to ſay that *Otho* parts
From faire *Poppæa*, is more tragicall
Then ſoule from body, honour from a man.

Poppæa.

I could, mee thinkes, flatter my feares, to keepe
Thee ever heere.

Otho.

And I can ſcorne all feares,
And dangers too, if thou command mee ſtay.

Poppæa.

No, goe, my Love, and warily let's meete
That wee may often meete: but why should still
Our higheſt bliſſe want freedome?

Otho.

'Tis, my faire one,
The envy of the Gods, who thinke the ſtate
Of men would æquall theirs, if greateſt joyes
Were eaſyeſt to obtaine, and therfore ſtill
In horrid dangers wrap their deareſt guifts,
As all the Poëts ancient fables taught.
Fire-breathing Buls did guard the Colchian fleece;
A waking dragon kept the golden fruit.
But thou, *Poppæa*, in my thoughts a prizè
Of greater value, and more luſtre farre
Then that which drew the bold Theſſalian forth
So farre from Greece, or made Alcmenaes ſonne
Invade th' Heſperides, art kept from mee
By ſtronger guards, the awfull Roman lawes,
Thoſe lawes reſiſt our love.

Poppæa.

Oh where was *Otho*
Then, when my virgin bloſſome was the hope
Of thouſand noble youths? hadſt thou beene ſeene
Poppæaes bed and beautyes had beene thine,
And with a lawfull uncontrolled flame
Had met thy wiſh in thoſe delights, which now
Wee are inforc'd to ſteale.

Otho.

Muſt it bee ſo
For ever then?

Poppæa.

It muſt while *Rufus* lives.

Otho.

Nor can I blame bleſt *Rufus*, if hee ſtrive
To keepe ſo great wealth, which if it lay beyond

The

The Indian *Ganges*, Scythian *Tanais*,
Or horned *Ammons* ſcorch'd and thirſty ſands,
Would draw the Roman Monarch to forſake
His worlds Imperiall ſeat there to enjoy,
And think thoſe baniſh'd that remain'd at Rome.
If I were *Cæſar*, and condemn'd by fate
To want *Poppæaes* love, I ſhould bee poore:
No other deare prerogative could that
High wreath beſtow, but only power to make
Thee mine without a rivall: I might then
With boldneſſe take thee from *Criſpinus* armes.

Poppæa.

But could that act bee lawfull?

Otho.

Canſt thou doubt it?
Where two loves meete can marriage bee unlawfull?
Of which love is the ſoule, the very forme
That gives it being no dead outward ty,
But natures ſtrong and inward ſympathy.
Can make a marriage, which the Gods alone
Have power to breede in us, and therfore they
Have only power to ty ſo ſweete a knot.
I am thy mate; nor did thy father, when
Hee gave that ſnowy hand unto another,
Ought but rebell againſt the Gods decree.

Poppæa.

Thou art to good an advocate, and I
Too partiall for a judge.

Otho.

Bee conſtant to mee
Till fortune give a bolder priviledge.
And warrant to our love, of which I have
Receiv'd ſuch faire preſages, as I cannot
Deſpaire; meane while by ſtealth I muſt behold
Thoſe ſtarry eyes, and think my ſelfe moſt happy
In that, though no man know my happineſſe.

The

Poppæa.

Poppæa.

Can men count thoſe delights a happineſſe
Which they conceale?

Otho.

Yes, thoſe that truly love. *Enter Fulvia.*

Fulvia.

Madam, my Lord is come.

Poppæa.

Farewell deare *Otho.*

Otho.

Farewell: love guard thee till wee meete againe. *exit.*

Enter CRISPINUS, GETA.

Criſpinus.

Come *Lucius* ſtudy to forget it now,
And let's bee truly merry; my *Poppæa*
Bid' *Lucius Geta* welcome, my colleague
That was, but ſtill my frend.

Poppæa.

You are moſt welcome.

Geta.

Thankes faireſt *Lady.*

Poppæa.

But my Lord, what meanes
That ſpeech of yours, that *Lucius Geta* once
Was your colleague and is not.

Criſpinus.

I'l tell thee,
Great *Agrippina* has commanded *Cæſar*
To command *Pallas* to command us two.
To quit our charge and ſuddainly reſigne
The governement of the Prætorian campe
To Burrhus hand; at which hee ſtormes; but I
Am merryer farre, and lighter then before
Wee may live freely now; *Cæſar* has tane
A weighty burthen from my weary necke
I thanke his goodneſſe.

Geta

Geta.

Thanke his ſottiſhneſſe,
Tis that has pleaſured you. ah frend it needes
Muſt grieve all noble hearts, that can love juſtice,
And pity ſuffring innocence, to ſee
The harmeleſſe yeares of young *Britannicus*
Expoſ'd to all the malice of his foes,
And ſtupid *Cæſar* made the inſtrument
To ruine his owne ſonne: whileſt his great power
By others is abuſ'd againſt himſelfe
And his poſterity.

Criſpinus.

I do beleive it.

Geta.

His ſervants all, that to himſelfe were true,
Or faithfull to his ſonne, are murther'd now,
Or elſe diſplac'd by her: our truth's the cauſe
That wee have loſt our places.

Criſpinus.

Tis no matter;
Wee looſe no honour by our truth; and ſince
While wee had power, wee faithfully diſcharg'd
Our truſt to *Cæſar*, let's no longer ſtirve
To guard him 'gainſt his will; but take his gift.
Hee gives us eaſe, and freedome, to retire,
And taſt the ſweetes of privaty, and there
Enjoy our lives free from the glorious noiſe,
And troubles of a Court; inſtead of waiting
On *Cæſar* now, on thee I will beſtow
That time, my faire *Poppæa*, and attend
On thy delighes; thou wilt not caſt mee off
As *Cæſar* does.

Fulvia.

Shee cannot promiſe you
I know her heart better then you in that.

Crispinus.

None can describe the sweetes of countrey life
But those blest men that do enjoy, and tast them.
Plaine husband men, though farre below our pitch
Of fortune plac,d, enjoy a wealth above us.
To whome the earth with true and bountious justice
Free from warres cares returnes an easy food.
They breath the fresh and uncorrupted aire,
And by cleare brookes enjoy untroubled sleepes.
Their state is fearlesse, and secure, enrich'd
With severall blessings, such as greatest Kings
Might in true justice envy, and themselves
Would count too happy, if they truly knew them.

Geta.

Tis true, *Crispinus*, greatest Monarchs oft
Have in the midst of all theyr carefull glorye*s*
Desir'd such lives as those plaine people lead.

Crispinus.

Let us enjoy that huppinesse then *Lucius*
The countrey sports and recreations
And friends as innocent as wee, with whom
Wee need not feare the strength of richest wine
In drawing out our secrets: but well fill'd
At supper time may hold a free discourse
Of *Cæsar's* weakenesse, of the wealth and pride
Of his freed'men, how lordly *Pallas* rules;
How feirce and cruell *Agrippina* is,
What slaves the Roman Senate are become,
And yet next morne awake with confidence.

Poppæa.

All this, my Lord, you may discourse at Rome
If you can wisely choose your company.

Crispinus.

Well said *Poppæa*, thou art a woman right
Thou lov'st the city well.

Geta.

I cannot blame her,
ſuch beauty ſeekes no corners, but may well
Become th' Imperiall city of the world.

Criſpinus.

Come *Lucius Geta*, let's goe in and laugh
At our proud enemyes, enjoy theire malice,
And drowne our cares in rich *Falernian* wine
As ancient as *Opimius* Conſulſhip.

Enter to them NARCISSUS.

Geta.

Here comes a man, *Criſpinus*, I beleive
Is ſory for this change.

Criſpinus.

I thinke ſo *Lucius*.

Narciſſus.

Haile noble *Romans*.

Criſpinus.

Haile to you *Narciſſus*.
How dare you venture a ſalute on us,
Or make a viſite to ſuch guilty men?

Narciſſus.

Guilty my Lord, in what?

Criſpinus.

In beeing wrong'd.
Thoſe that are wrong'd in Court, are made offendours,

Narciſſus.

I muſt confeſſe, my Lord, it was a wrong
To you and your Colleague to bee diſplac'd,
But you have ſpirits great enough to ſcorne
That injury, and pity him that did it,
I meane that ſuffer'd his proud foes to doo it
Rather againſt himſelfe then you; the wrong
Muſt fall on *Cæſar*, and his hapleſſe houſe.
Blinded by fate, and neere his fall, hee throwes
Away the beſt ſupporters of his ſtate.

Geta.

The thought of that as I am true, *Narciſſus*,
Afflicts mee more then mine owne loſſe can doe.

Criſpinus.

For mee, I thinke my ſelfe well free'd from trouble
Were't not for feare of poore *Britannicus*.

Narciſſus.

I doo beleeve it, noble Lords; but you
Are now diſchar'gd, and may retire with ſafety.
My part is yet to play, a part of danger,
And I will act it bravely: here I vow
By all the Gods, no feare ſhall make mee ſhrinke
Till I have once more righted *Claudius*
Againſt the luſts and treaſons of a wife.
Nor do I boaſt of *Meſſalinaes* death.
It was the times neceſſity, that made
Mee then to ſhew my power: that power perchance
Is yet as much; nor ſhall the Lordly *Pallas*,
Though ſwell'd with *Agrippinaes* luſtfull favours,
And back'd by her authority, hee thinke
Himſelfe ſole ruler in th' Imperiall houſe,
Finde that *Narciſſus* is ſo fall'n in ſpirit
But that I dare attempt as much as then.
Great *Cæſar's* ſafety is as much in danger
As then it was, his nuptiall bed as ſtain'd,
And I will dy, or take the ſame revenge,
That then was taken; all their plots and treaſons
Will I reveale to *Cæſar*, and purſue it
With ſuch a dauntleſſe conſtancy, that if
The Gods forget not to bee juſt, this day
Proud *Agrippina*, and her minion fall.
The young *Britannicus* ſhall ſtand ſecure
In his high birthright; *Meſſalinaes* ghoſt
Shall then perchance, although ſhee hate mee now,
Forgive the hand that cauſ'd her overthrow,

Geta.

Bravely reſolu'd, *Narciſſus.*

Criſpinus.

You ſhall doe
An act that all good men ſhall thank you for.
Will you goe in, and taſt my wine'.

Narciſſus.

Not now.
I came but only to reveale my purpoſe
To you, whoſe noble wiſhes may befriend it,
And when occaſion ſerves, may truly witneſſe
My juſt intents; this hower I am expected
By *Cæſar* in his gardens; there I'll put
My life upon the hazard; every minute
May breede a change, and all delayes have danger
For *Cæſar* upon thoſe diſcoveryes
That I already have made to him, utter'd
Some words laſt night at ſupper in his wine.
Of which I feare that *Agrippina* tooke
Too great a notice; therfore ſpeede muſt helpe us.
Farewell my Lords.

Ambo.

Farewell: the Gods aſſiſt thee. *Exeunt.*

OTHO.

Otho.

So rich a bondage is *Poppæas* love,
That I were baſe if I ſhould wiſh for freedome,
Nay more, ingrate, ſhould I deſire to change
So ſweete a care for quietneſſe it ſelfe;
Should I ſuppoſe that ſtate, which ſome dull ſoules
Call calme content, were halfe ſo rich, ſo free
As are theſe pinings, this captivity.
Were there in love no cares, no ſighs, no feares,
There were in love no happineſſe at all.
What bliſſe, what wealth did e're the world beſtow
On man, but cares and feares attended it?

Yet

Yet who ſo baſe, as, to bee freed from thoſe,
Would throw away the higheſt bliſſe on earth?
Let ſilly ſhipheards, whoſe poore narrow ſoules
Not much exceede the beaſts they tend and feede,
That know, like them, no farther regions
Then ſome few feilds, no larger bounds of pleaſure
Then ſatisfaction of bare natures needes,
Bee ſtill ſecure ſince they have nought to looſe,
And reſt content becauſe they never knew
What cityes were, and gorgeous *Pallaces*.
Should Monarchs, who are taught to know th' extent
Of natures wealth, and what the world affords,
Forgoe their glorious fortunes, cauſe they want
That wretched thing, which only ignorance,
And low contempt can give, Security?
Should I forgoe my faire *Poppæaes* love
Becauſe ſome cares, ſome feares, and ſighs attend it:
When every ſmile of hers can recompence
A thouſand ſuch? were too much pooreneſſe in mee
Had I nere ſeene thoſe ſtarry eyes of hers
More hapleſſe farre my ignorance had beene.
I hed, like wretched men, that are borne blinde,
Nere knowne there was a Sunne to guild the world.
But to injoy her love without all feares,
Without all rivalls, were a bliſſe beyond
Mortality: the Gods would envy mee.
Shee's now another mans: that may bee thought
The greateſt barre to *Otho's* happineſſe.
But I have framed in my jealous thoughts
A greater barre then that: young *Nero Cæſar*,
In whoſe acquaintance I of late have found
So neere a roome, as faire preſages tell us,
Is like to weare th' Imperiall wreath: his power
May take her for mee from *Criſpinus* armes.
But then perchance I looſe her more then ever.
Or ſhould hee ſee her now to rivall mee

I were undone: hee's amorous, and oft
Sollicites mee to let him ſee my Miſtres.
I for that friendſhip, which I dare not looſe,
Dare not deny his importunity.
And therfore to prevent what may enſue
(For yet hee never heard *Poppæas* name)
I have made love to the faire freed woman
Young *Acte* of meane ranke, but ſuch a face,
As whoſoever had not ſeene *Poppæa*
Would thinke this *Acte* natures Maſterpeice.
On her will I divert young *Nero's* love.
And to that purpoſe I have got her picture.
But here hee comes. *Enter Nero.*

Nero.

What *Otho*, ſtill retir'd?
Where lives the face that breedes this melancholy?
There is no other cauſe can doe't: I know
Thou art not buſy'd with affaires of ſtate.
I prithee let mee ſee her: a friends counſell
May eaſe thy paſſion.

Otho.

Tis not fit a Prince
Should ſtoope ſo low as to the paſſions
Of privatemen.

Nero.

The name of friend admits
Of no ſuch diſtance.

Otho.

Sr. no man, whom you
Are pleaſ'd to call a friend, deſerves that name,
Unleſſe hee know himſelfe to bee your ſervant.

Nero.

Come prithee leave thy fooling, and bee plaine.
Where there is no familiarity
Society is loſt: why art thou fearfull
To let mee ſee her whoſoere ſhee bee?

Otho.

Sr. I could give you a plaine common reaſon,
If ſhee bee foule, ſhee is not worth your ſight.
If faire, you are too great a rivall for mee.
But yet, know Sr. I am ſo free from thoſe
Unworthy feares, that I dare truſt my life,
My love, and all I have into your hands.

Nero.

Spoke like a friend, and thou maiſt ſafely doo't.
Then firſt behold her picture, and by that
Find whether ſhee bee worth the ſight or no.

Nero.

Can any mortall beauty bee ſo ſweete?

Otho.

I would there were not.

Nero.

Sure the painter flatters.

Otho.

Oh no, hee had not art enough to reach
The glory of it; were the ſubſtance here
How dull would this now lovely table ſhow!
See how his greedy eyes devoure the picture.
Hee's caught, hee's caught; Cupid' I thanke thee now.

Nero.

I never ſaw true beauty till this houre.
But wherfore didſt thou wiſh there were no ſubſtance
So ſweete as this? why would'ſt thou bee depriv'd
Of ſuch a happineſſe? but I perceive
It is thy feare: come, let it not bee ſo.
I but deſire to ſee whether the painter
Have err'd or no: and do not thinke, my *Otho*,
That I will wrong thy love ſo much, or make
My wife *Octavia* jealous.

Otho.

Sr. how ere,
My life, my love, and fortunes all are yours. *Exeunt.*

CLAU-

CLAUDIUS, NARCISSUS.

Narciſſus.

Your Majeſty may yet prevent it all,
And juſtly throw upon the Traitors heads
That ruine which ſo boldly threatens you,
And your too much abuſed family.
Yet *Cæſar* may bee ſafe, if hee will uſe
That power the Gods have put into his hands.

Cæſar.

What courſe, *Narciſſus*, can wee run, to make
The people ſenſible of our eſtate,
What danger threatens us, and how our Juſtice
Is forc'd to meete the treaſons of a wife?

Narciſſus.

Let not too vaine a care of popular breath,
Or what the Vulgar may ſurmiſe, outweigh
The ſafety of youre perſon' and youre houſe.
But I am moſt aſſur'd that all the world
Except youre ſelfe, have long obſerv'd theire plots,
And if they ſee your waken'd Juſtice now
Ariſe to cenſure *Agrippinaes* death,
They will not thinke the execution done
Too ſoone on her: theſe humble knees, Oh *Cæſar*.
Which for your ſafety I ſo oft have bow'd
Before the Gods, now to your ſacred ſelfe
I bow, entreating that you would bee ſafe,
And not beleeve the Gods by miracle
Will worke for you whileſt you neglect your ſelfe.

Cæſar.

Ariſe *Narciſſus*, tis th' unhappy fate
Of Princes ever (as *Auguſtus Cæſar*
Was wont to ſay) the people ne're beleeve
That treaſons were complotted 'gainſt theire perſons
Untill thoſe treaſons take effect, and then
Too late perchance they pity and beleeve.

Narciſſus.

But was the wiſe *Auguſtus* therfore ſlow
Or timorous to cut offenders off?
Fear'd hee the peoples whiſpers? *Cæſar*, no.
Hee well knew to uſe the ſword hee had.
Hee had not elſe liv'd till times gentle hand
Diſſolv'd in peace his long felicity,
And made the world by ſuch continuance
Of power, beleeve hee was a God on earth.

Cæſar.

But ſome offendours are too great to ſuffer
The common courſe of Juſtice: againſt ſuch
Wiſe Princes have forborne to draw the ſword,
And rather ſought ſome wayes of policy
How to enſnare them.

Narciſſus.

Cæſar, thoſe are wayes
As much unfit for Princes as unſafe.
As many Monarchs have in dangerous times
Beene ruin'd quite by going wayes too low
(Though they have ſeemed ſubtle) as proud ſubjects
Have beene undone by playing Princes parts.
And as this high, and open way befits
The power and perſon of earths greateſt Monarch:
So it befits the times neceſſity.
You have already, *Cæſar*, ſhew'd your ſword,
And if you ſtrike not now, you do not right
Your ſelfe at all, but only arme your foes
With plots of miſcheife to prevent their owne,
And haſten on your quicke deſtruction.
You have already threaten'd, and thoſe ſpeeches
By *Agrippina*, and her minion *Pallas*
Were overheard; who, like ſeene ſnakes will now
Beſtirre themſelves in a more deſperate fury.
I have already caſt mine owne poore life
Into the utmoſt hazard: but alas!

That is a thing not now considerable.
The Gods above can tell how willingly
For *Cæsar's* safety I would sacrifice
This life; make mee the cheifest instrument
Impose what part of this exploit you please
Upon *Narcissus* hand, and if I faile
To execute, I'll not refuse to dy.

Cæsar.

Oh my *Narcissus*; I have found thy faith
In other services: it is resolv'd,
Their pride shall feele my justice; thou shalt see
How soone I will secure my self and thee. *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

Wee are discover'd *Pallas*: all our drifts
Are sounded by *Narcissus*, and by him
Lay'd ope to *Cæsar*, who dissembling yet
The knowledge of it, seekes a suddaine way
To ruine both of us: nor had wee fear'd
So soone as felt his fury, had not wine
Betray'd his thoughts to us; you know last night
What speeches *Cæsar* in his drunkennesse
Let fall before us; and twas lately told mee
That meeting young *Britannicus* hee wept,
Confest that hee had wrong'd him, and there vow'd
A quicke redresse: what counsell shall wee take?

Pallas.

Wee have no time for counsell: but must act
As soone as thinke: wee goe not now to worke
But to prevent a mischeife, and our cure
Must bee as strong, and quicke of operation
As our disease is dangerous and suddaine.
That bird, that sees the snare, and will bee caught
Deserves his death: and since that *Cæsar* knowes
His purpose is discover'd (as *Narcissus*
Ha's before this inform'd him that wee heard it)

That

Hee'll

Hee'l quickly act what elſe hee had deferr'd.
No way is left us but to meete the danger,
And for prevention firſt attempt to doe
That which wee feare to ſuffer.

Agrippina.

By what meanes
Shall wee procure his death? for poiſon ſlow
Perchance may faile to lend a timely helpe
Unto our ſafety; and too quicke a venome
May make the fact ſuſpected.

Pallas.

Should the fact
Bee nere ſo much ſuſpected, your eſtate
Would bee more ſafe then now it is; but who
Would dare to utter it when *Cæſar's* dead,
And your owne Sonne the Emperour: for ſo
My confidence aſſures mee it will bee.
Therfore bee ſpeedy, Madam; for your danger
Where fame, where life, and Empire all are threaten'd,
Gives you no nice election. So 't bee done
No matter how.

Agrippina.

Thou haſt confirm'd mee, *Pallas*.
The way's reſolv'd already; there were lately
The faireſt muſhromes ſent from Lybia
That ere theſe eyes beheld, a meat which hee
Affects with greedineſſe; in one of thoſe
Cæſar ſhall meete his death; if that ſhould faile
His cheife *Phyſitian Xenophon* is mine.
But are things ſtong, and ready to confirme
The Empire upon *Nero*.

Pallas.

Tis the beſt
And happieſt time, before *Britannicus*
Bee growne to riper yeares, while yet hee weares
His childiſh robe, and *Nero* has beene ſhowne

To

To all the people in triumphall weedes.
But when the deed is done, place warily
Your guards about the Pallace gates, and keepe
Britannicus within; whileſt *Nero* back'd
By *Seneca* and *Burrhus*, by the campe
And *Senate* bee ſaluted Emperour,
And all be ſetled ſure.

Agrippina.

How fit a time
To work his own deſtruction *Cæſar* choſe
To tempt with threatning *Agrippinas* fury!

ACTUS III. SCENA. I.

PETRONIUS, OTHO, MONTANUS.

Petronius.

Is *Nero* fir'd?

Otho.

Extremly. I at firſt
Seem'd melancholy to looſe *Actæ* ſo,
And hee ſeem'd loath to wrong mee; but at laſt
When his deſires were high, I cunningly
Withdrew my intereſt, and gave way to his.
Which hee has taken for the greateſt favour

That ever man could doe him and I hope
It has endear'd him strongly.

Montanus.

Thou wilt grow
A happy man.

Petronius.

Tis the best way to rise.
The wench is faire, and of behaviour
Wanton enough to make the arrantst novice
A perfect scholler in the schoole of *Venus*.
Seneca himselfe rather will give way
That hee should satisfie his lust on her
Then seeke th'adulteries of noble women.

Montanus.

But gentlemen, have you not heard the newes?
There is a great combustion in the Palace
As I have been inform'd, theeves are fall'n out.
The two proud freemen *Pallas* and *Narcissus*
Are clashing 'gainst each other.

Petronius.

I am glad ont.
I hope some curious rogeries will come on't.
Those are the fellowes that have rul'd the state
These many yeeres, and trampled on the lives
Of noble men *Cæsar's* credulous weakenesse.
But yet mee thinks *Narcissus* should not dare
Now to contest with *Pallas* he has got
Too great a start of him, and is too neere
Acquainted with the empresse.

Montanus.

So they say.

Otho.

Has a fine time on't who would think the rogue
Sould bee so ambitious as to court an Empresse?

Petronius.

'Twas her ambitions to bee made the wife

Of *Claudius*, that first made her prostitute
Her selfe so low, and court this fellows love,
Whom she perceiv'd to have a ruling power
Over his doating master, to ambition
Shee sacrific'd her honour tis well known.

Montanus.

And hee by dooing of the Empresse, takes
The surest way of keeping *Cæsars* love

Petronius.

Yes, there's no doubt of that. You know the proverbe.

Enter to them ANICETUS.

Anicetus.

Well met my Lords; I come to finde you out.

Otho.

What's the newes *Anicetus*?

Anicetus.

Great my Lord.
Cæsar, is wondrous sick; 'tis thought to death.
The Pallas is by souldiers guarded round.
A great and frequent *Senate* is assembling.
The Consuls and the Priests are making vowes
For *Cæsar's* safety.

Montanus.

Claudius is old

Petronius.

There have been other wayes to end a Prince
Besides old age. But what is that to us?
Come let's away and shew our forwardnesse
To joy or mourning as occasion serves.
I am prepar'd for both.

Montanus.

And so am I.

Otho.

Both must be done, if *Cæsar* dye, our greife
Must last but till the successor bee known;
And then wee must rejoyce.

Petronius.

Tis true.

Otho.

But I
Shall have true cauſe of joy if *Nero* reigne, *Exeunt.*

BRITANNICUS, OCTAVIA, XENOPHON.

Britannicus

Shall I not ſee my father ere hee dy?

Octavia.

Good *Xenophon.*

Xenophon.

Good Madam pardon mee,
Nothing is now ſo great an enemy
To his diſeaſe as noiſe and company.
Hee's lately fall'n into a gentle ſlumber.
Deep ſleeps his feaver will not let him take.
I'll certify your highneſſe when hee wakes.
And wait upon you.

Octavia.

Thankes good *Xenophon.* *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

I long to heare what favour *Nero* findes
In the Pretorian campe, how *Cæſar's* death
Is by the ſouldiers and the *Senate* taken.

Enter PALLAS.

Welcome my deareſt *Pallas* What's the newes?

Pallas

Madam, as good as *Jove* himſelfe could ſend,
No ſooner in the campe was *Cæſar's* death
Divulgd, but *Burrhus* enters to his charge,
And *Nero* with him, who by all the cohorts
Was preſently ſaluted Emperour.
Only ſome few were ſilent, and a while
Stood ſtill expecting young *Britannicus*;

But

But when they saw their expectation
Was all in vaine, and none but *Nero* came,
Fearing at last to loose the Donative
Which *Burrhus* promis'd them in *Neros* name,
They joyn'd themselves unto the greater part.

Agrippina.

Britannicus within the Pallace here
Is safe enough for comming forth to day.
The *Senate* have scarse heard of *Cæsar's* death
For wee conceal'd it till all things were ready.

Pallas.

Now in a Princely chariot mounted high
Guarded by *Burrhus* and the souldiers
Nero sets forward to the *Senate* house.
But having past the campe, you need not feare
The *Senate*, Madam.

Agrippina.

Pallas thou wert ever
A messenger of lucky newes to mee.
A safe contriver of the highest plots,
A happy instrument thou hast deserv'd
What ere thou hast enjoy'd, though thou have tasted
That which a *Cæsar* su'd to tast, and bought
The world in recompence.

Pallas. If ever *Pallas*
Had any fire that could advance his thoughts
To high and great exploits, hee kindled it
At your cælestiall beauty, as from heaven
Promethens stole that active fire, by which
Hee durst himself adventure to create
The noblest creature man. What act on earth,
What undertaking should he tremble at
Whom *Agrippinas* favours animate?
And what had I been but a peece of earth
Cold, dull, and useless, had I not been quickn'd
By your ætheriall touch. *Agrippina.*
The happinesse

Of this high day has made thee eloquent

Pallas

The love of royall *Agrippina* can
Inspire the dullest Soule with life and language.
When the *Idulian* Queene was pleas'd to grace
A shepheards boy more then his humble thoughts
Could hope or wish, the ravish'd tongue forgot
That rurall language which before it us'd.

Agrippina.

Ah *Pallas* what a glorious change is here!
How is the lowneſſe of our late deſpaire
Turn'd to the height of joy and happineſſe?

Pallas

Quicke reſolution well purſu'd will cure
The ſadeſt ſtate.

Agrippina.

Goe thou and heare more newes,
Whileſt I diſpoſe of things about the Palace *Exeunt*

A SENATE, POLLIO CONSUL, VITELLIUS, SENECA, OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Pollio.

May all the Gods accept our ſacrifice,
And bee propitious to the vowes, that wee
Have vow'd for *Cæſar's* ſafety.

Vitellius.

Let the great
Divine and ſacred *Nero Claudius*
The care of heaven, ſole ruler of the earth,
And *Romes* high Father not forſake his world
So ſoone t' encreaſe the number of the Gods,

Enter BURRHUS.

Burrhus.

Haile to the *Conſul*, and this ſacred *Senate*.
Great *Claudius Cæſar's* dead, in whoſe high throne
With one conſent the ſouldiers have agreed

To ſeat young *Nero* his adopted ſonne;
And do by mee entreat your ſuffrages
Fathers conſcript; to ratifie their choice.

Seneca.

Let not young *Nero's* yeeres diſparage him,
Nor trouble you, ſince happy preſidents
May well be ſhowne, grave Fathers. Great *Auguſtus*
Of glorious memory, no more in debt
To yeeres then hee began to rule the ſtate,
With what ſucceſſe not one in all this noble
And great aſſembly can bee ignorant.
But weigh with mee the difference of the times.
The ſtate is ſetled, and has flouriſh'd long
In peacefull government; no civill rents.
No factions now, nor armies are a foot
To ſtaine with *Latian* blood *Philippi* plaines,
To dye the *Actiak* and *Sicilian* Seas,
And through all regions beare th' unnaturall wounds
Of bleeding *Rome*. No ſuch affrighting names
As *Marcus Brutus*, *Caſſius*, *Lepidus*
Great *Pompey's* ſonne, or feirce *Antonius*
Arm'd with the power of halfe the Roman world
Stand to oppoſe him. Oh yee Gods how great!
How many dangers had beſet the ſtate
When young *Auguſtus* mannag'd it! yet hee
Withſtood and vanquiſh'd all thoſe difficulties.
And why ſhould *Nero* our elected Prince
Ag'd like *Auguſtus*, not bee able now
To ſway a peacefull ſcepter? for the right
To this high, wreath although *Britannicus*
Were borne the naturall ſonne of *Claudius*,
A Prince of hope enough, and may by ſome
Bee thought much wrong'd in this election,
Yet weigh it rightly, and no wrong is done.
For *Nero* was adopted. But beſides
The claime of his adoption, hee is borne

A truer heire to our Imperiall house
Sprung up from the loines of great *Augustus Cæsar.*
Britannicus from *Liviaes* sonnes alone.

Vitellius.

Nor are the yeeres of young *Britannicus*
So ripe as his to govern.

Pollio.

Seneca,
Has wisely shewed his undoubted right,
And I with joy approve the souldiers choise.

Octavia.

The Gods preserve *Nero* our Emperour.

Otho.

Now is the height of all my wishes reach'd.

Enter NERO *with* TRIBUNE.

Tribune.

Roome for *Cæsar.*
Hee goes on, and takes his state.

Pollio.

Haile *Nero Cæsar.*

Seneca.

Haile great Emperour.

Vitellius.

Ever *Augustus.*

Otho.

Most invincible

Petronius

Most sacred *Tribune*

Montanus.

Holyest highest Priest.

Pollio.

Father of *R*[illegible]

Nero

That honorable title
Is yet too weighty for my tender yeeres.
Then let mee weare it, fathers, when my paines
My toile and travell for the publike weale

By ayde and favour of the Gods have made
Mee worthy of it. But your free consent
Fathers conscript, your powerfull suffrages
Powerfull and honor'd as the voice of heaven
In confirmation of the souldiers choise
Fils mee with joy immortall, and shall binde
My best indeavours to requite that love.
My heart is cleare, my education
Was not in factious, in tumultuous times,
Or civil broiles, my former life has been
As free from doing as receiving wrong;
And therefore bring I to th' Imperiall Throne
No feares, no grudges, hatred or reveneg.
This sacred *Senate*, which the world adores,
Shall still retaine her old prerogative
While *Nero* lives. My privat house affayres
Shall from the free Republicke bee divided,
And never turne the course of common Justice.
No publike Office shall bee bought for gold.
The sacred Consulary power shall judge
As heretofore, th' affaires of *Italy*
And forreigne provinces. My care alone
Sall bee to rule and lead the Souldiers.
And such to all the people will I bee
As I would wish th' immortall Gods to mee.

Vitellius.

Oh speech most worthy *Jupiter* himselfe!
Worthy for ever to be registed
In brazen Pillars for the world to read.

Pollio.

Let publike thanks by *Senate* bee decreed.
To *Cæsar's* grace and goodnesse.

Nero.

No *Asinius*,
Let me deserve them first, first give me leave
What I have promis'd to performe in deedes,

That then if thankes or praiſes bee beſtow'd
They my bee judg'd as due, and better Crowne
Your owne true juſtice, and the Princes merits.

Pollio.

Oh happy *Rome* in such an Emperour!
Long may hee reigne on earth, and late, oh late
Become a glorious ſtarre in Heaven.

Tribune.

What word.
Will *Cæſar* give the watching ſouldiers?

Nero.

The excellent mother, *Tribune*, is their word.
Your company, noble *Conſul*, wee'll entreate
Home to the Pallace.

Pollio.

I'll attend on *Cæſar*.

Exeunt.

Manent OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

The Prince has promis'd faire.

Petronius.

Elſe *Seneca*.,
That made the ſpeech for him had been too blame.

Otho.

Well, let him ſpeake as *Seneca* inſtructs
In publicke ſtill ſay I, I know his heart
And ſecret thoughts better then *Seneca*
Shall ever doe; and there are Joviall dayes
A comming, gallants, ſay I prophecy.

Montanus.

Will it bee lawfull to eat Lybian muſhroms,
And Britiſh oyſters without being cited
Before the cenſor?

Otho.

Yes *Curtius*, and to whore
For vacuation after them; thoſe gifts

Will

Will bee Court vertues. Come, the Prince is hopefull.

Petronius.

Would I might have the bringing of him up.

Otho.

If I can helpe it, thou ſhalt have a ſhare
In his tuition. Welcome *Anicetus*, *Anicetus*
Is it to mee you come?

Anicetus.

To you, my Lord.
Cæſar deſires your company at the pallace.

Otho.

Cæſars deſire, is a command, which I
With joy obey, returne my humble duty
Good *Anicetus*, I'll attend him ſtrait.

Exit Anicetus.

Otho.

Now my mad ſhavers, do you know me yet?

Petronius.

Yes, very well; the queſtion is if thou
Wilt know us now.

Otho.

Tut man, *Nero* ſhall know you.
I'll bring you both into his neare acquaintance.
Now faire *Poppæa's* mine and mine alone.
Cæſar muſt grant my firſt petition,
Or elſe deny the love hee ſwore to mee
Ifere hee wore the worlds Imperiall wreath.
His power muſt fetch *Poppæa* from her husband.
Nor is the deed ſo envious. Other Princes
Have done the like, and yet not tax'd in ſtory.

Petronius.

Beſides, hee knowes *Criſpinus* never lov'd him,
And was an enemy to his adoption.
'Gainſt him perchance hee will the ſooner grant it.

Exeunt

Agrip. This is the day that sets a glorious Crown
On all my great designes this day declares
My power, and makes the trembling world to know
That *Agrippina*. only can bestow
The *Roman* Empire, and command the wheel
Of suffring Fortune, holding in her hand
The fate of nation. Is there not a name
Above *Augusta* to enforme the world
How great I am? What *Roman* Deity
Shall I assume? the petty Goddesses
Would all resigne; but that they blushing think
Their stiles and altars are too meane for mee.
Lacinion Juno shall bee proud to share
Her glorves all with mee, and think her power
Grac'd with my fellowship would brighter shine;
Or leave her name, and bee ador'd by mine.

Enter NERO, POLLIO, SENECA, *Burrhus.*

My *Nero* is return'd, haile *Nero Cæsar.*

Nero.

Haile great and deare *Augusta*, best of Mothers.
To whose sole care and goodnesse *Cæsar* owes
All those rich honours that he weares to day,
And will ackowledge ever

Agrippina.

Brighter still
For many yeeres let this blest day returne,
That does bestow for my deare Lord and husband
The ne're-enough lamented *Claudius*
So true a solace on my greiv'd Soule.
This is that *Cæsar* now, on whom my hopes
And comforts all rely.

Nero.

This is that *Cæsar.*
Who in obedience and true filiall love
To *Agrippina* will for ever strive

With

With vertuous æmulation to excell
Her most admir'd and exemplary goodnesse.

Pollio.

How well this piety becomes them both.

Pallas. *Enter Pallas*

Long live great *Nero Cæsar.*

Nero.

Thankes good *Pallas.*
Wee are indebted to thy faithfull service;
And therefore till wee finde some greater meanes
To make requitall, still retaine that office
Which in our father *Claudius* time thou held'st.
Bee still our steward of th' Emperiall house.

Agrippina.

Hee has deserv'd it.

Nero.

For the funerals
Of our dead father, in what state and order
They shall bee celebrated, wee refer
To you deare Mother.

Agrippina.

Let the order of them
Bee like *Augustus Cæsar's.* Let him have
A Censors funeralls with divine honours,
And put among the number of the Gods.
Nor shall our grandmother great *Livia*
With her *Tiberius* to *Augustus* show
More piety, or more magnificence
Then wee to our divinest *Claudius.* *Exeunt*

ACTUS IIII.

NARCISCUS, GETA.

Narcissus.

If wee bee bound to think the Gods consider

This

This humane world, why are wee not as well
Bound to beleeve the greateſt members of it
On whom the fates of all the reſt depend,
Should be their greateſt care? why ſhould the Gods
Extend their narrow providence, and ſhow
Their power in woods and rurall villages,
Yet thinke th' Imperiall family of *Rome*
Not worth their care at all? for if they had
Where ſlept their juſtice, when great *Claudius*
Was murdred by his ſervants and his wife,
And they ador'd, and honour'd by the ſtate
For acting that accurſed deed! what right
Can all the ſubject world receive from thence!
What good can dwell upon the earth with ſafety?
Proud *Pallas*, thou haſt got the victory
O're poore *Narciſſus*, and mayeſt ſafely triumph
With thy falſe Empreſſe; for no law can reach
The height you ſoare at now but yet take heed
That very crime, the ſame Impiety
That aided you in your foule enterpriſe
To vanquiſh mee and juſtice on my ſide,
May one day pull you downe.

Geta.

Alas *Narciſſus*!
Too truly *Rufus*, thou, and I foreſaw
This fatall ſtorme 'gainſt *Claudius* wofull houſe.
Britannicus is now the object growne
Of all mens pitty.

Narciſſus.

In the wrong hee did
Unto his hopefull ſonne hee needs muſt ſee
His own deſtruction woven. But if *Claudius*,
When I detected all their plots to him,
Had beene of nature quick and reſolute
Hee had prevented all, and ſcap'd his murder.
Tis certaine hee was poiſon'd

Geta

Geta.

Rome it ſelfe
I feare will rue that ſad adoption,
And in the wrongs of young *Britannicus*
Will beare too deepe a ſhare. while the fierce rule
Of *Agrippina* laſts.

Narciſſus.

What better hope
Does *Nero* promiſe us?
Thoſe that are neere, *Xiphilin*
And inward with his nature, doe ſuſpect
In him all ſeedes of vice and tyranny,
Though ſmoother'd for a time, at leaſt, not hurtfull
While he refraines from medling with the ſtate
That his night rambling revels, drinking feaſts,
And cruell ſports that he's delighted in,
Are vices of his nature, not his youth.

Geta:

Tis true, *Narciſſus*, I of late have heard
Many beginne to feare the prophecy
of *Aenobarbus* his deteſted ſire *Xiphilin.*
That nothing good could be begot twixt him
And *Agrippina*. Too too true alas!
Such prophecies of ſome of our late Princes
Have prov'd to *Rome*, as that *Auguſtus* made
Of the ſlow-jaw'd *Tiberius*, and *Tiberius*
Of his ſucceſſour *Caius*, whom hee nam'd
A Phaëton to the unhappy world.

Narciſſus.

All that I hope for is a wretched life,
If that bee not too much for mee to hope.
Into Campania will I go, but there
If death purſue mee, *Cæſars* armes are long,
And I am arm'd for any accident.
Let none, but with a ſpirit prepar'd to dye,
Dare to adventure on proſperity.

Geta.

Geta.

Rufus and I are both reſolv'd to leave
The city too, wee are not ſafe within it.
But farre perchance, removed from her ſight
Wee may eſcape fell *Agrippinas* ſpight.

Enter to them CRISPINUS.

Criſpinus.

Ah *Lucius Geta*, I am now enforc'd
To that retirement, which wee lately talk'd of.
Becauſe my danger mov'd mee not before,
Freſh cauſe is giv'n mee. Now I would not breath
The aire of *Rome* for all the wealth within it.

Geta.

What cauſe is that *Criſpinus*? ſpeake

Criſpinus.

Poppæa,
That was my wife is carried from my houſe,
And divoc'd from mee by command from *Cæſar*,

Narciſſus

The Prince begins his reigne moſt hopefully.

Criſpinus.

Do you not wonder how I beare it thus?

Geta.

I muſt confeſſe the loſſe is wondrous great.

Criſpinus.

True, had ſhee been my chaſt and faithfull wife,
The loſſe had been beyond all æſtimation.
Nor could a manly ſpirit have borne the wrong.
But ſhee was none of mine, her heart, my *Lucites*.
As I have ſince diſcover'd, long ago
Was given to wanton *Otho*, and with him
Tis thought ſhe ſtole her cloſe adulterous houres.
For on that *Otho*, *Nero* has beſtow'd her. *Xiphilin ex Dione*
Wanting her heart, that gawdy peice of Earth
That men call beauty, I ſhould ſoone have ſcorn'd,
Though *Cæſar's* warrant had not come at all.

Shall

Shall wee be gone, my freind?

Geta.

With all my heart.
It was my feare *Poppæa* would have caus'd
Your ſtay too long.

Criſpinus.

I'll put her from my thoughts.

Narciſſus.

Farewell my Lords, all happineſſe attend
Your Country life, though I can hope for none.

Criſpinus

Farewell *Narciſſus* may the Gods protect thee. *Exeunt.*

Otho, Poppæa. *Otho,*

Thus greateſt Monarchs oft have given away
What they themſelves ne're ſaw, nor e're knew how
To value truely. *Nero* has beſtow'd
A guift unknown on mee, which I, that taſte
How ſweet it is, would not againe forgo
For all his Empires wealth.

Poppæa.

Nor would I change
My *Otho's* love for great *Auguſtus* ſtate.

Otho.

There to enjoy where both extreamly love
Is ſuch a happines (as I have heard
Some do obſerve) it ſeldome does befall
A marryed paire, or if it doe, that bliſſe
Endures not long, ſo envious are the fates.
But that's a dreame, my love, I doe not feare.

Poppæa.

Thou need'ſt not feare *Poppæas* conſtancy
Though *Cæſar* were thy rivall,

Otho.

Sweet I do not;
I dare not wrong thy truth, or take ſo much
From mine own happineſſe, as to ſuſpect

Thy

Thy constant minde at all: but *Cæsar's* power
Is of extent as large as mans desire.
'Twas that, that made thee mine; and nought but that
That gave, can take my happinesse away.
Thou hast a face, *Poppæa*, that would cleare
A ravisher from guilt, that would excuse
The treason of a freind, and make my wrong
No staine to' *Cæsar's* honour, though the Gods,
Or *Cato* were his judges.

Poppæa.

Cæsar would not;
Hee loves thee wel besides a noble minde
Would scorne to taste the fruites of forced love,

Otho.

A long beseidging is as forcible
As an assault, and wins the fort as sure
Though not so soone.

Poppæa.

Nay spare your arguments.
I can looke through them; thou art fearfull, *Otho*,
That I should long to see the Court: alas
I have no such ambition to bee known
To *Agrippina* or *Octavia*.

Otho.

Mistake mee not, sweete love, I am so farre
From jealousy of thee, that 'twas my purpose
To make it my request that thou would'st go
And see great *Cæsar's* Court: nor do I thinke
Octavia would bee jealous, or that danger
That once befell the faire *Calphurnia*,
Whom *Agrippina* banish'd Italy
Because that *Claudius Cæsar* prais'd her beauty,
Should fall on thee.

Poppæa.

It shall not fall on mee,
I will noe see the Court: fy *Otho* fy

How

How wretchedly in striving to conceale
Thy jelousy, thou dost betray it to mee!
but tha Why dost thou tell mee so of *Cæsar's* power,
Octauiaes wrath, *Calphurniaes* banishment
Through *Agrippinaes* envy? tis thy love
Better then all these subtle tricks will keepe
My thoughts at home.

Otho.

It shall appeare to thee
I do not feare at all; or if I did,
Tis not the failing of thy constancy.
Enjoy what freedome thou desir'st, *Poppæa.*
Now for a little while excuse my absence,
I must for sake thee, though unwillingly.
Cæsar, I feare, expected my return
Long before this love has beguil'd the time,
And made my stay seeme shorter then it is.
But I shall think till I returne againe
The houres are long, till then farewell *Poppæa.* *Exit.*

Poppæa.

I finde his feares alreadie, my estate
Was better farre before *Rufus Crispinus*
Was grave. and knew not wantonnesse enough
To make him jealous as this *Otho* does
That too unlawfull love, which then I shew'd
To *Otho*, is the mother of these feares.
I sold *Seleucus* the Magician come; *Enter Fulvia*

Fulvia:

Madam hee waites without,

Poppæa.

Go call him hither.
Seleucus is the master of his Art.
All his prædictions hitherto have prov'd
Most true and certaine. why should I desire
To know my future fate; and hasten woe
(Should it prove ill) before the time of woe?

How But

But tis a longing that I cannot check *Enter Seleucus*
Welcom *Seleucus*, have you found it out?

Seleucus.

Madam, your ſcheme is drawn, and there I finde
The ſtars alot another husband to you

Poppæa.

Another after *Otho*?

Seleucus.

Yes, a third.

Poppæa.

What ſhall hee bee?

Seleucus

The greateſt Prince on earth.

Poppæa

Ha, *Cæſar*?

Seleucus.

Yes; it muſt be *Cæſar*, Madam.
And tis as true as if the oracles
Of *Jove* and *Phœbus* had foretold it both.

Poppæa.

This *Cæſar* that now lives?

Seleucus.

I can no further
Inſtruct you Madam; what you heare is true.

Poppæa.

Drinke this *Seleucus* for my ſake. Farewell.

Exit Seleucus

To bee *Auguſta* is the greateſt gift
The fates can give; nor does it ſeems to mee
A thing ſo much unlikely. *Otho's* feare
Perchance was fatall. If it were, in vaine
His care will bee, nor can hee then accuſe
Mee, but the fates that overrul'd my love.

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

It is decreed, *Silanus* muſt not live.

Th'

Th' Imperial blood, that runs within his veines
Were there no other cauſe, is crime enough.
Hee is deſcended in the ſame degree
That *Nero* is from great *Auguſtus* loines.
And ſome have lately whiſper'd that his age
Is more mature for ſoveraignty then *Nero's*.
Beſides thou know'ſt his brother *Lucius*,
That ſhould have marryed young *Octavia*,
By us was hunted to his death; and hee
May meditate revenge.

Pallas.

You need not feare
A ſpirit ſo ſluggiſh as *Silanus* is.
Your brother *Caius Cæſar*, in the midd'ſt
Of all his feares and jealouſyes to which
Hee ſacrific'd ſo many noble branches
Of your Imperiall houſe, contemn'd *Silanus*
As one in whom there was no ſpirit, or danger,
And call'd him nothing but the golden beaſt.

Agrippina.

Wee cannot tell, if times of trouble come,
How much that beaſt by courage of attendants
And confluence of ſouldiers may bee chang'd.
Hee is Proconſul now of *Aſia*,
And may here after, if the people ſhould
Maligne our government, bring power againſt us.

Pallas.

If you will have it ſo *Publius Celerius*
And *Aelius* now going for *Aſia*
Have undertaken there to poiſon him.

Agrippina.

Let it bee done. But *Pallas*, firſt of all
Let a centurion bee diſpach'd into
Campania, to kill *Narciſſus*. there *Xiphilin.*
Hee muſt not live, that did contrive our ruine
And knowes, I feare, the meanes by which wee ſcap'd it.

By our command it ſhall bee warranted.
But tell me Pallas, ere thou goeſt, are all
The German ſouldiers come?
Pall: Madam they are.
You have a royall guard. *Ag*: Go deareſt *Pallas*,
Diſpatch *Celerius* into *Aſia*,
And the Centurion to Campania. *Exit Pallas*
Now *Agrippina* is her ſelfe, and all
The power and dignity ſhe holds, her own.
I do uot owe it to a marriage bed,
Or poore dependance on a husbands love,
Where every minion might have rival'd mee.
There is no power, no ſtate at all, but what
Is undependent, abſolute and free.
Beſides my proper and peculiar guards
Two lictors by the *Senate* are aſſign'd
Diſtinct from *Cæſar* and the Conſuls ſtate
To wate on mee, that all the world at laſt
Th' Imperiall power may in a woman know.
I was an Empreſſe but ne're reign'd till now. *Exit*

A banquet.

Enter NERO, BRITANNICUS, OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS, ACTE.

Ne. Come ſit my friends, they here are freely welcome
That bring free Joviall hearts farre hence bee all
Sad lookes, ſower geſtures, and Cenſorious thoughts.
They fit not *Nero's* table. kiſſe mee *Acte*,
And ſmile upon the feaſt. *Acte*: *Cæſar's* command
Is warrant ſtrong enough.

Nero.

And thou ſhalt finde
No rigid *Catoes* here.

Petronius.

True, great *Cæſar*,
Let ſuch ſowre *Scauri* ſit at home, and write
Againſt the pleaſure of this happy age
Dull ſatyres, ſuch as water, or the lees

Of Tuscan wine beget, let them admire
Those old penurious times. when Curius fed
On leekes and onions, when *Fabritius*
Feasted the frugall *Senate* with hung beefe
And rusty bacon, and in earthen pots
Drunke smal Etrurian wine, let them bee still
Such as themselves would make themselves, unworthy
To taste the plenty that *Rome* now enjoyes.

Nero.

Why did our famed ancestours so farre
Extend their conquering armes, and strive to get
The riches of the world, but that their Nephews
Might now enjoy them? twere ingratitude
To their rich labours, should wee scorne to use
What they have got: or if the use of it
In us bee riot, sure 'twas avarice
In them, that toil'd so much to purchase it.

Otho.

Which of those rigid Censors, that declaime
Against the vices of the times, and tax
Rome as luxurious now would call it vertue
In a rich Citizen, whose store-houses
Were fraught with the best provisions, his chests crow-
His cellars full of rich Campanian wine (ded
Yet hee himselfe to drinke the courcest lees,
To feede on ackornes, pulse, and crabs, to wrong
His nature, and defraud his Genius?
'Tis said the Furies keep pin'd *Tantalus*
From tasting those delicious fruits hee sees.
Such would the Roman vertue bee, should shee
Affright her sonnes the masters of the world
From tasting that which they themselves possesse.

Petronius.

'Tis true; those former ages were most frugall;
Wee thank them for't, the better is our fare.
Let those that list, now when they have no need,

Stil

Still imitate, and boast their hungry vertue,
Whilest wee poore sinners are content with pleasants,
Numidian hens, and *Lybian* purple wings
Wilde goates, bores, hares, thrushes, and musherons,
Oysters, and mullets, and such vicious meates.

Nero.

Fill mee some wine. *Montanus* melancholy,
And silent now?

Montanus.

Cæsar, I was but listning
To heare *Petronius* good morality,

Nero.

Otho I know cannot bee melancholy,
Hee is a bridegrome, and but new possest
Of that faire treasure he has courted
So long, well *Otho*, I must have a sight
Of faire *Poppæa*,; such I know shee is.

Otho.

Shee is unworthy of great *Cæsar's* sight.

Nero.

A round, go *Anicetus* bring the lots;
Because that no respect of power shall let
The freedome of our mirth, who ever drawes
The longest cut shall bee our King to night,
And bee obey'd what ere hee shall command.
I will resigne my chaire to him. Com draw. *Enter Anicetus they draw*

Tis I that am your King.

Montanus.

I shall beleive
That Fortune has her eyes.

Britannius

In getting Crownes
Nero, thy fortune is too good for mine.

Nero.

I know none envy mee.

Britannicus.

No envy can
Redresse my wrongs. *Nero.*
I will beginne with *Otho.*
I do command thee send by *Anicetus*
Some trusty token that immediatly
May fetch *Poppæa* hither to the banquet.

Otho.

It shall bee done, this ring will fetch her hither,
Exit Anicetus.
I ever though 'twould come to this.

Petronius.

Thy plot
Of bringing *Acte* in, I see has fail'd.

Otho.

I care not much; he would at last have seene her.

Nero.

Thou wilt not frowne my *Acte*, though thou see
Another beauty here.

Acte.

No royall *Cæsar*,
Nor shall you heare mee envious, or detracting,
Although I know *Poppæa* is a Lady
Whose beauty does as farre excell poore *Acte*
As *Cinthia* does the lesser starres, or *Venus*
The other Sea-nimphs.

Nero.

Freely spoke, faire *Acte*.

Acte.

Here you shall finde the saying does not hold
That women are detractors from each other.

Nero.

Meane time begin a health.

Montanus

So please it *Cæsar*
To great *Augusta*, *Agrippina's* health.

Nero.

Let it go round. And now *Petronius*
I come to thee, I doo command thee write
A Satyre presently against those pleasures
Thou didst so lately prayse, against th' attire,
And costly diet of this notorious age.
This is thy Taske.

Petronius.

I must obey the King:
And now's the fittest time for such a satyre.
I never finde my vertue of that strength
As to contemne good Victualls, but upon
A well fill'd stomacke.

Nero.

Give him wine to heighten't.

Petronius.

I' ve writ already a Satirick Poëm
In a grave angry way, where I complaine
That Romes excesse, corruption, luxury,
Ruin'd the present governement, and twixt
Cæsar, and *Pompey* caus'd a civill warre.
Listen, and heare my castigations.
„ Now all the world victorious *Rome* had wonne
„ All lands, all Seas, the morne and evening Sunne,
„ Nor was content; the Ocean's furrow'd ore
„ With armed ships; if any farre-hid shore,
„ Or land there were, whence burnish'd gold was brou
„ It was their foe: by impious warre they sought
„ (Fates fitted so) for wealth, old known delight
„ They scorne, and Vulgar bare-worne pleasure slight
„ Pearles in th' Assirian lakes the souldiers love.
„ Bright polish'd earth in hew with purple strove.
„ Numidia marble brings the Scythian yeilds
„ His early fleece, the Arabs spoile their fields,
„ But see more ruine yet, and greater wounds
„ Of injur'd peace, the Mauritanian grounds

„ And Libyan Ammon's fartheſt woods, to get
„ Wilde beaſts are ſearch'd whoſe teeth a price muſt ſet
„ Upon their death, fierce Tigers fetch'd from farre,
„ And ſtalking ſtately on the Theater
„ Are fed with humane ſlaughter to delight
„ The peoples eyes: after the perſian rite
„ (Alas I ſhame to ſpeake it, and diſplay
„ The ruine-threatning fates) they cut away
„ Manhood from growth ſpoil'd youths, for Venery
„ Softning their nature, to keepe backe thereby
„ In ſpite of time, their age. her ſelfe in kinde
„ Abuſed nature ſeekes, but cannot finde.
„ They dote on Catamites, weake bending hamnes,
„ Unnerved bodyes, and a thouſand names
„ Of new attires, looſe haire of men, in whom
„ All man is loſt. To ſlaves from Affrick come,
„ Rich Citron boards, bright purple, which to view
„ Couſening the ſenſes beare a gold like hew.
„ A wanton traine, in wine and ſurffets drown'd
„ The far fetch'd table do encompaſſe round.
„ The wealth that all the ſpacious world containes
„ By lawleſſe armes the roming ſouldier gaines,
„ Their gluttony growes witty; guilt-heads caught
„ At Sea, alive are to their tables brought.

Nero.

No more, my furious Satyriſt, thou haſt chid
The times ſufficiently.

Petronius.

If you bee pleas'd
I have obey'd.

Nero.

Well, I perceive *Petronius*
A man may write a Satyre, and yet bee
No *Scaurus*, *Curius*, or *Fabritius*.

Petronius.

A Satyriſt ſhould bee the contrary,

And know thoſe vices, which hee meanes to tax.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* thy taske is next,
Stand up and ſing a ſong.

Britannicus

Give mee ſome time:
I cannot doo't extempore, what ſubject?

Nero.

Chooſe that your ſelfe.

Britannicus.

Then give me leave to ſing
Mine owne misfortunes, how I came to looſe
The Roman ſcepter.

Nero.

How! that will not fit
A feaſt of mirth.

Britannicus.

No, let them laugh that winne.

Petronius.

A good ſmart youth.

Nero.

This muſt not bee endur'd.
I muſt bee freed from this continuall feare:
Then bee excus'd, be merry Gentlemen,
I wonder *Anicetus* ſtayes ſo long.

Enter ANICETUS *with* POPPÆA.

But ſee they come, is this *Poppæa, Otho*

Otho.

Tis ſhee great *Cæſar.*

Nero.

Wonder of her ſex!
Bright paragon of *Rome*! all beauty es yet
That I have ſeene, have been but foiles to ſet
A greater luſtre on this ſtarre of light.

Otho.

His eys a e fixt; his changing lookes do ſpeake

A depth

A depth of paſſion, or my jealous feares.
Dazle mine eyes too much.

Petronius.

Tis ſo; ſhee's loſt.
If ever Lady were a tennis ball
Tis this, ſhee's bandy'd ſo from one to tother.

Nero.

Muſt then another reape the envy'd fruit
Of my injuſtice? muſt *Poppæa* bee
My crime, that tooke her from her other Lord,
To be his pleaſure?

Otho.

Is great *Cæſar* ſad!

Nero.

No *Otho*, ſtill ſhee ſhewes more faire and faire.
I cannot check my love; ſir faireſt Lady.
And with your luſtre grace our feaſt. I ſee
Thou art a moſt incomparable judge
In beauty, *Otho*, and were I to chooſe
A wife againe, I'd truſt no eye but thine.

Otho.

Would I might ſerve you Sr. in any thing.

Nero.

But tell mee thy oppinion in one queſtion.
Which doſt thou thinke the nobleſt in a Prince,
If hee would uſe his power, and do an act
That may bee thought unjuſt, to do't for frendſhip,
Or ſatisfaction of his owne delight.

Otho.

Sr. had you made the caſe a private mans
(For the delights of Princes, as themſelves,
Wee muſt count ſacred) I could ſoone reſolve it.

Nero.

Let it bee ſo for tis the ſame in juſtice.

Otho.

I thinke it nobleſt then to do't for frendſhip.

For friendſhip ever was held honorable,
But ſatisfaction of our own delights
A thing of weakeneſſe rather then of honour.

Petronius.

I ſee his drift.

Nero.

Auguſtus Cæſar then
And I by power have done the ſelfe ſame act.
But in the cauſe I have excell'd *Auguſtus*,
For hee to ſatisfie his own hot love
From *Claudius Nero* tooke faire *Livia*.
I from *Criſpinus* took a brighter beauty
To ſhew my ſelfe no lover. but a frend.
Doo not miſtake mee *Otho*, and ſuppoſe
I do repent the favour I have done
I know tis well beſtow'd.

Otho.

Twas ſuch a favour
That I confeſſe, great *Cæſar*, as no tongue
Can bee enough expreſſive; ſo tis hard
To find a heart that's large enough to pay
Sufficient thankes in thought, but pious men
Have ſtill acknowledg'd that no thankes of ours
Can æqualize the bounty of the Gods.
And Princes are like them, ſhould I thinke leſſe
I ſhould both wrong the giver, and the gift.

Nero.

In valuing her aright thou ſhew'ſt thy ſelfe
As wiſe as juſt. I wiſh thee joy of her.
But faireſt Lady, ſince it was ſo late
Before you grac'd our feaſt, I cannot thinke
That I have entertain'd you yet at all.
The ſcene ſhall therefore change, another roome
Shall bid *Poppæa* welcome to the Court.

Exeunt.

Vlth

VITELLIUS, POLLIO.

Vitellius.

Yet *Cæſar* and his mother well agree.

Pollio.

The Gods continue it, but *Vitellius*,
I feare the ſequell. *Agrippinaes* fierce
And haughty diſpoſition will too much
Provoke her ſonne 'tis thought; and hee too forward
To throw all nature off.

Vitellius.

I thinke ſo too.
And therefore I could wiſh that *Agrippina*
Would go a gentler way, ſhee muſt not build
Too much upon her merits, though wee know
Twas ſhee that put the ſcepter in his hand.
For vicious natures, where they once begin
To take diſtaſt, and purpoſe no requitall,
The greater debt they owe, the more they hate

Pollio.

Beſides ſhee 'll find it harder far to worke
Her ends upon a ſonne then twas to rule
A doating husband.

Pollio.

Time will ſhew it all,
And we ere long ſhall know which way to leane.

Exeunt.

BURRUS, SENE'CA.

Burrhus.

Will *Agrippina* ſit to day with *Cæſar*
On his Tribunall, to give audience
To thoſe Armenian Embaſſadors?

Seneca.

There is no doubt ſhee would; but I have ſpoil'd
That ſtate I hope; for I have councell'd *Nero*.
That if ſhee come, hee ſhall ariſe and meet her,
As if hedi d it in reſpect, and duty

Deferring th' audience of th' Embaſſador,
I hope ſhee will not underſtand our drift.

Burrhus.

Pray heaven ſhee do not, for you know her fierceneſſe.

Seneca.

It would bee *Romes* diſgrace, the *Senates* ſhame
And my great crime if the Embaſſadors
That come to plead their countryes cauſe at Rome,
Should ſee a woman perching up with *Cæſar*
Into the chare to give them audience.
And ſit commanding ore the Roman enſignes:
Twas not the cuſtome of our Anceſtors
To ſee ſuch ſights.

Burrhus.

True *Lucius Seneca*,
Our Anceſtours had no ſuch kinde of women,
Shee in her heart's a man, and you miſtake
If you eſteem her onely *Cæſars* mother;
Not his Colleague, and partner in the Empire
Or more then ſo.

Seneca.

I am not ſo ingrateſull
To hate the woman, ſince I know it was
Her favour, that repeal'd my baniſhment.
But I diſlike theſe things, that forreigne ſtates
In her unſeemly carriage ſhould behold *Xiphilin.*
The ſhame of Rome, and would ſhee keepe a temper
Fitting the quality of her ſex and place,
I ſhould admire the bravery of her minde.

Enter NERO, VITELLIUS, POLLIO,
NERO, *takes his ſtate, after them*
the Embaſſadors.

Embaſſadors.

Long live great *Nero Cæſar*, the cheiſe care

Of

Of heaven, and higheſt Souveraigne of the Earth,
The Princes of *Armenia*, *Vologeſes*
And *Tiridates* greete your Majeſty
By us, and do congratulate the honor,
Which ſince divineſt *Claudius* left the earth
To make a God in heaven, is fall'n on you.
And to your high Tribunall doo referre
The controverſie that is now betwixt them.

Nero. *Enter Agrippina.*

My mother's come, deſer th' Embaſſadors
As twas appointed *Seneca.*

Seneca.

I will.

Nero.

Haile deareſt mother.

Agrippina.

Wherefore riſes *Cæſar*
From his Tribunall when affaiers of ſtate
Are brought before him?

Nero.

No reſpect can bee
Too much for mee to give great *Agrippina.*

Agrippina.

Excuſe mee, *Cæſar*, if it bee reſpect,
Tis now unſeaſonable, take your ſeate,
I'll ſit with you my ſelfe, and here th' affaires
Of theſe Armenian Embaſſadors.

Nero.

Wee have deſerred the buſineſſe a while,
And thought upon a fitter time to heare it.

Agrippina.

If you ariſe becauſe the audience
Is ended or deferr'd upon juſt reaſons,
Tis not reſpect to mee that made you riſe,
As you alldg'd at firſt, but I have fonnd it,
The reaſon that deferr'd this audience

Was *Agrippinaes* comming.

Burrhus.

This I fear'd.

Seneca.

Twas carryed ill of *Cæsar* at the first.

Agrpppina.

I see thou blusheſt, *Nero*, and may'ſt justly,
To call that reverence, which was affront,
Was a dissembling not befitting *Cæsar*.
And to affront a mother so deserving
Was not the duty that befitted *Nero*.

Nero.

Can neareſt *Agrippina*. thinke her *Nero*.
Will ever doo an act that may bee judg'd
Affront to her

Agrippina.

This was thou know'ſt it *Nero*.
And so does thy adviser *Seneca*
From him it came, no other Senator
Durst to have councell'd my disgrace but hee

Seneca.

Never will *Seneca*, so much obleidg'd
To *Agrippinaes* royall favour, wish
Or councell her disgrace.

Agrippina.

Oh *Seneca*.
Philosophy nere taught ingratitude.
If you had thought the place unfit for mee,
You might have told mee privatly before,
Not us'd this tricke which how so ere it hold
In Stoticisme, I'm sure is nought in state.

Vitellius.

Shee payes him home.

Pallas.

Her spirit cannot brooke
The leaſt appearance of an injury.

Agrippina

Agrippina.

Cæsar, I'll leave thee now, nor shall my presence
Bee any hinderance to thy state affaires.

Nero.

I'll go a long with you.

Agrippina.

For *Seneca*
I'll shortly teach him new Philosophy.

Exeunt.

manent. BURRHUS, SENECA.

Seneca.

Shee's full of anger; but it moves not mee,
Since what I did was just, and for the honour
Of *Rome* and *Cæsar*; honest actions
Will bee enough protection to them selves.

Burrhus.

Take the best courses to prevent her fury.

Seneca.

Ah noble *Burrhus*, it must bee hereafter
Our greatest care to curbe that womans pride,
And what wee can remove her from all rule
And government of state, for *Agrippina*
Is of too hot and fierce a disposition.

Burrhus.

What should wee doo? twere pitty to incense
Her sonne against her.

Seneca.

The Gods forbid that wee
Should strive to make the Prince unnaturall.
But to prevent this inconvenience
I will perswade young *Cæsar* not with purpose
To wrong his mother, somewhat to abate
Her dangerous greatenesse, to remove from her
Part of her guard of German souldiers,
And to displace her wicked counsellour
That insolent and Lordly free'dman *Pallas*.

Burrhus.

Burrhus.

You need not use perswasions to your Pupill
(The Gods forgive it if I judge amisse)
To stand against his mother, I much feare
Hee will too quickly hate her, for no reason
To state belonging; but because shee growes
Imperious over him, and strives to curbe
His lust and riots, those, those *Seneca*
I feare are seedes of future tyranny
And for his love (as if the fates decreed
To make his passions all preposterous)
His vertuous wife noble *Octavia*
The only instance in this wicked age
Of women great and good, is loath'd by him.

Seneca.

That most afflicts mee: could wee finde a cure
For that disease, all other maladyes
A riper age will in some part redresse,
And I will strive to change them by degrees,
And get him to forsake his loose associates.
But let us first endeavour to remove
Fierce *Agrippina* from all rule of state.

Burrhus.

I'l joyne with you, and use my best endeavours.

Exeunt.

NERO.

Nero.

Shall I that am an Emperor, bee check'd,
Control'd and baffled in my Pallace thus?
I will remove this mother farre from mee,
And give command to *Burrhus* to provide
That house that was *Antoniaes* for her.
The Pallace shall bee free to my delights,
I make no doubt but that the people know,
And hate her pride, and will the lesse repine
At what I do against her, I have told her

For

For ſhee provok'd mee paſt all patience)
art of my minde already, ſhee ſhall rue
Perchance too late the fierceneſſe ſhee has ſhew'd

Exit.

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

ngratefull *Nero*, is thy mothers power
So ſoone offenſive growne? canſt thou ſo ſoone
Caſt off all filiall dutyes, and forget
What I deſerve from thee? wouldſt thou deprive
Mee of all power that gave all power to thee?
Did I ſo wickedly for thee procure
The height of human ſtate, that thou ſhouldſt take
All ſtate from mee with greater wickedneſſe?
Oh wronged *Claudius*, this ſad puniſhment
My bloody treaſon, and ingratitude
To thy offended *Manes* juſtly payes.
By the moſt loving, and moſt injur'd Lord,
The worſt of wives was more belov'd then now
The beſt of mothers by a wicked Sonne.
Ile make him know what hand it was that rais'd
His fortunes to this height: but wherefore weeps

Enter Octavia.

My deare *Octavia*?

Octavia.

What accurſed fate
Purſues the wofull *Claudian* family?

Agrippina.

Deare daughter ſpeake thy griefe.

Octavia.

Was I beſtow'd,
Or rather loſt in marriage, to advance
Upon my brother's ruine, *Nero's* ſtate
To obee by him deſpys'd, hated and made
A baſe freed-womans ſlave?

Agrippina.

Agrippina.

What freed woman?

Xiphilin

Octavia.

Acte thy *Nero's* concubine my mistris
That dares within the palace to contest
Nay to revile *Octavia.*

Agrippina.

She dares not,
Nor shall she doo't, I'll slit the strumpets nose,
If she dare speake 'gainst thee.

Octavia.

You cannot mother.
Nero delights in none but her, his soule
In *Acte* lives; on her he does bestow
That love, that's due to mee: But mee hee loaths;
Oh dismall love, Oh fatall marriage!

Agrippina.

Take comfort sweete *Octavia,* I'll redresse
Thy wrongs, or venture mine owne fall with thee.

Enter Ner

Nero.

You have complain'd I see, *Octavia.*
Is there a chiding toward?

Agrippina

Has thy guilt,
And th' unkinde wrongs thou hast already done
Unthankefull *Nero,* to thy vertuous wife

Xiphilin

Arm'd thee with such an impudence, that now
Thou canst prevent her just accusing thus?

Nero.

How's this?

Agrippina.

Mee thinkes although thou hadd'st no sparke
Of goodnesse left thee, yet in Pollicy

Thou

Thou should'st not dare maintain a base borne strumpet
Against thy lawfull wife great *Claudius* daughter.

Nero.

Mee thinkes in policy you might remember
You speake to *Cæsar*, not a childe.

Agrippina.

Tis true,
Thou hast forgot the duty of a childe.

Nero.

I will bee better known; if I bee Croft
In my delights, I will bee bold to crosse
You in your pleasures too

Agrippina.

Oh heavens, what pleasures
What joyes or studies have I ever had
But to preferre thee *Nero?* are my cares
And all my labours thus requited now?
Let not too vaine and foolish confidence
Of what thou art, make thee presume to wrong
Thy mother and thy wife; or thou shalt know
The Empires lawfull heire is yet alive.
The wrong'd *Britannicus* is growing up
To take his right, and to revenge the wrongs
Which hee and all his family susteine *Xiphilin.*
I'll go my selfe to the *Prætorian* Campe,
And plead his cause before the Souldiers.
There let one-handed *Burrhus*, and that base
Unthankefull exile *Seneca*, appeare
Against the daughter of *Germanicus*.

Nero.

Yes plead the cause of young *Britannicus*;
And when y' have done, provide an advocate
To plead your own.

Exeunt Nero.

Agrippina.

Gone so abruptly from us!

Slights

Slights hee mine anger ſo?

Octavia.

Madam I feare
You tooke too harſh a way; his lookes were wilde
And full of rage; my ſad miſgiving ſoule
Tels mee ſome miſcheife's working in his thoughts.

Agrippina.

Feare not, *Octavia*, weell take the beſt
And ſureſt courſes to prevent the ill
That may enſue: and if mature advice
And councell cannot bridle him, wee'll uſe
Another meanes to curbe his inſolence:
I have already by my bounty made
Moſt of the Tribunes and Centurions.
My guards are ſtrong, and ſhall bee vigilant
Over the ſafety of *Britannicus*,
As mine own perſon, there's no open act
Of miſchiefe can bee on the ſuddaine wrought.

Octavia.

The Gods I hope will guard our innocence.

Exeunt.

NERO *ſolus.*

Nero

My feares have been too ſlow, and twas high time
That *Agrippinaes* thundring threats had wak'd
My ſleeping miſcheefes; which ſhall now no more
Study diſguiſes, but appeare in bold
And open acts with *Cæſars* ſtampe upon um,
Fearleſſe of vulgar whiſpering jealouſyes.
Upon thy death, *Britannicus*, a price
No leſſe then *Romes* imperiall wreath is ſet.
The deede, when done, will priviledge it ſelfe,
And make the power of *Nero* ſtrong enough
To warrant his miſdeede, who dare revenge
Or blame th' offence that frees mee from a rivall?
But I ſhall leave a worſe, and nearer farre

Behinde,

Behinde, my mother *Agrippina* lives;
Shee lives my rivall, nay my partner ſtill,
Nay more then that my Queene and Governeſſe.
I am no Prince, no man, nothing at all
While *Agrippina* lives, muſt ſhee then live
To make mee nothing? muſt the name of mother
Outweigh a ſcepter? could the name of husband
Protect her *Claudius*? no; her owne example
Shall teach mee ſtate: but firſt *Britannicus*
Muſt bee remov'd; his death aſſures my ſtate,
And makes mee able to conteſt with her.
That gentle poiſon, which *Locuſta* gave him,
If poiſon 'twere, whileſt wee did vainely feare
The peoples talke, has kept my feares alive.
Where is this hagge?

Enter Locuſta.

Locuſta.

Cæſar.

Nero.

Witch, beats her.
Feind, fury, divell.

Locuſta.

Mercy, mercy, *Cæſar.*

Nero.

I'll hew thy curſed carcaſſe into atomes,
Thou gav'ſt *Britannicus* an antidote
In ſtead of poyſon.

Locuſta.

Twas a gentle poyſon,
And ſuch as you commanded mee to make;
Hold *Cæſar* hold; I will redeeme all yet.

Nero.

Do it or dy, make mee a poiſon ſtrong,
A quicke and ſpeeding one.

Locuſta.

It ſhall bee done.

No

No sooner tasted, but it shall destroy.

Nero.

I'll see the tryall of it, and reward
Thy service well; but if *Britannicus*
Out live this day, this day shall bee thy last.

Exeunt

ACTUS V. SCENA. I.

BURRHUS, VITELLIUS, ANNICETUS, *Souldiers*

Burrhus.

It is the will of, *Cæsar*, souldiers
You must bee all discharg'd from guarding her.
But you shall have allowance, and thus much
I'll promise for your comforts, you shall bee
The next that are ascrib'd into the list
Of the *Prætorian* campe.

Souldiers.

Thankes noble *Burrhus*.

Burrhus.

Go *Anicetus*, give command that straight
That house, which was *Antoniaes* bee prepar'd
For *Agrippina*, and her family.
Cæsar will have the Palace to himselfe.

Vitellius.

Does *Agrippina* know't

Burrhus

Burhus.

Not yet I think.
Is there displeasure then 'twixt her and *Cæsar?*

Burhus.

I know not. you'll excuse my haste, my Lord
I must take leave.

exit *Burhus.*

Vitellius.

I like not these new turnes.
I came to visit her: but now I'll spare
My haile this morne. whither so fast my Lord?

Pollio.

To visit *Agripina.*

Vitellius.

Stay, I'll tell you.
There is some diffrence twixt her and *Cæsar.*
Her guards are tane away. I parted now
From *Burhus*, who discharg'd them. shee her selfe
Shall be remov'd from the Imperiall palace.

Pollio.

I like not that; I'll spare my visit then.

exeunt

PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

Otho will loose his wife then.

Petronius.

Yes, no doubt;
And I believe must leave the City too.
Nero's extremely fir'd, and hee will have her
Alone; poore *Otho* must not rivall *Cæsar*
Nor indeed is it fitting that the husband
Should make th' adulterer a cuckold.

Montanus.

Do'st thou beleeve, *Petronius*, that this change
Vexes *Poppæa?*

Petro-

Petronius

Yes, I warrant her.
Shee thinkes her beauty never could have done her
A greater service.

Montanus.

But shee seem'd to love
Otho extremely.

Petronius.

I confesse *Montanus*
I thinke her appetite stood well to *Otho*;
For it is a rascall of a winning carriage
And curious feature; but shee has enjoyed him
Sometime already, and that passion
Which you call love, does move in a degree
So low, and feeble, it is soone swallow'd up
In the deepe torrent of ambition.
Poppæa's proud; nor can that breast of hers
Harbour a love so strong, but it must yeeld
To pride her quality prædominant.

Montanus.

What can shee bee but *Nero's* concubine?
I see not what high honour lyes in that.

Petronius.

You cannot tell what shee may bee in time.

Montanus.

Shee cannot bee *Augusta*; that high name
Octavia, while shee lives, will keep, hee dares not
Forsake that wife (how e're I see do affect her)
To whom hee may bee sayd to owe the Empire.

Petronius.

For mine own part, I know not how twill go.
But I dare sweare *Poppæa* e're this time
Has ask'd and heard what the Chaldæans say
About her fortunes: our fine dames of *Rome*
Must stil bee tampering with that kinde of cattell.
Their doggs, their monkeys, and themselves do not
Witho

Without th' advise of such a cunning man,
Hast thou seene *Otho* lately?

Montanus.

Yes to day:

Petronius.

How does hee looke upon the businesse?

Montanus.

With somewhat sad; but *Cæsar* seemes to use him
So wonderfull kindly that he cannot thinke
Hee's wrong'd at all.

Petronius.

Prithee let's finde him out. *Exeunt*

PALLAS *solus.*

Pallas.

So longer steward of th' Imperiall house!
Are greatest benefits so soone forgot
By wicked Princes? tis and ever was
The fate of Courts, Monarchs unjustly hate
Acknowledgment: what power, what honor now
Does *Nero*, hold but what hee owes to mee?
My merrit, nay my wickednesse, which did
To him encrease the merit, for this heart
Has bled the more for my ingratitude
To my best master *Claudius*, his sad wrongs
Another now revenges! oh *Narcissus*,
Perchance the conquest that I got ore thee,
When wee two strove about the successor
To *Claudius Cæsar*, will hereafter prove
More fatall to the conqueror, then him
That lost the day, thou in *Campania*
Didst happily, though hunted to thy death
By us; and carry'dst to thy grave the honor
Of ayding the just side, oh Royall Empresse,

Enter Agrippina.

Feare our care to raise unthankfull *Nero*
Will prove at last our own destruction

My

My places losse I weigh not, but for feare
It prove a step to your dishonour, Madam.

Agrippina.

Tis for my sake that thou hast lost it, *Pallas*,
With mee my frends are hated. Oh sad fate
That followes impious actions! well perchance
And happily might I have liv'd if wrong'd
Britannicus had reign'd! Oh would the losse
Of this unworthy life could yet procure
That injur'd Prince his due.

Pallas.

Can fortune turne
The course of things so strangely, that you Madam,
The Prince his mother and his raiser too
Should wish the others reigne

Agrippina.

It can, it can.
This is the power and justice of the Gods,
That when wee thinke our selves most safe in ill,
Can frustrate all our confidence, and make
That power, which seem'd to bee our prop, to bee
Our onely cause of ruine, wee are children,
Vice makes us children, like to them, wee cry
For Knives to hurt our selves with, and the Gods
To punish us oft grant what wee desire.

An herse brought in OCTAVIA.
following.

Pall. What dolefull noise is this?

Agrippina

Ay mee, I feare.

Octavia.

Oh dismall day! Oh wretched family!
Fly back bright *Phœbus* to the Easterne shore,
Or hide thy head; thou hast at Rome beheld
A feast more black then ere Mycenæ saw.
Ah dearest brother, sweet *Britannicus.*

Agrippina.

Britannicus.

Octavia.

Murder'd *Britannicus*,
Poison'd at *Nero's* table.

Agrippina

Breake my heart
The greatest woe, that could befall, is come.
Forgive mee, gentle Soule, twas I that gave
That viper life, and rule to ruin thee.
Thou need'st not curse mee; the impiety
Of him that kill'd thee, will revenge thy death.

Pallas

Faire hope of *Rome*, sweet flower untimely cropt,
What patentasion shall sad *Pallas* make
T'appease thy wronged ghost, and expiate
My foule offences? to the King and Queene
Of sable night I'll build two grassey altars;
And yeerely there, if any yeeres at all
I have to live. with sad libations
Invoke the manes of *Britannicus*,
Thou from the groves of faire Elysium
For ever wail'd for ever honour'd Prince,
Deigne to accept my humble sacrifice.
Or if those rights bee too too meane for thee,
Perchance the Genius of afflicted *Rome*
Shall weep hereafter ore thy grave, and waile
Th' untimely death of her *Britannicus*.

Agrippina.

Gentle to thee let earth and water prove.

Exit Octavia,

This wofull murder of *Britannicus*.

& sisnus.

Bodes ill to mee, and my presaging soule
Is fill'd with ghastly feares. Ah *Pallas*, *Pallas*,
This is the entrance into Paricide,

And

And but the Prologue to a mothers death.

Pallas.

Would I could ſpeake to your deſtreſſe and feares
A true and reall comfort, ſuch a one
As might not flatter your eſtate, and make
You weaker then before, by taking from you
All ſtudy of prevention.

Servant.

Cæſar. Madam,
Is come to viſit you.

Agrippina.

Pallas farewell. *Enter Ne*

Nero.

What weeping Madam? what unworthy cauſe
Dares force a teare from greate *Auguſtaes* eye
While *Nero* lives? if 't bee my brother's death,
That caus'd this ſorrow, I could joyne in teares
Had not that tragedy already rob'd
Mine eyes of moyſture,

Agrippina.

This hy pocriſie
Makes mee leſſe truſt his nature then before.

Nero.

The Gods have rob'd mee of one comfort now
The fellowſhip of ſweet *Britannicus*,
That all my piety may bee confin'd
To you, deare mother, you containe alone
Within a Parents ſacred name, all ſtiles
Of kindred now, all bonds of pious love.
Feare not a change in mee.

Agrippina.

I do not *Cæſar.*

Nero.

Minarvus feaſt is celebrated now

Nero.

Minervaes feast is celebrated now
Five dayes at Baiæ thither you shall go *Xiphilin.*
And feast with mee deare mother, there forget
All jealous feares, and you shall never more
Complaine of *Nero.* If the stratagem } *aside.*
Of *Anicetus* prosper, her complaint
Shall be to *Pluto*, and the Ghosts below. } *exeunt.*

OTHO *with his Commission.*

Otho.

The Gonernment of *Lusitania.*
By *Nero's* grace and favor is bestow'd
On mee! Oh glorious name of banishment!
Yet welcome now, since faire *Poppæa's* lost.
I thanke thee, *Nero*, thou provid'st a brave
And honourable cure for that sad wound
Thou hast inflicted on my love-sicke Soule.
How great a torture had it been to mee
To live in *Rome* divorc'd from her, and see
That beauty folded in another's armes!
Hence wanton thoughts; fond love for ever vanish,
Collect my soule what ere thou hast within thee
Of Roman left, and answer to the call
Bright honour makes, some favourable God
Pitying the lusts and riots of a youth
So much misled, has sent this seeming losse
To wake me from so base a lethargy.
Employ'd in forreigne action, I shall live
Free from th' infectious vices of this Court,
And farre from seeing the abhorr'd effects
Of future tyranny, which needs must breake
From *Nero's* vicious nature. At my birth
The Augures promis'd high and glorious hopes.
This is the way to bring them. Spaine shall find
Another *Otho* then was sent from *Rome.*
Poppæa promis'd here to meete, and take

Her last leave of mee. why should I againe
Renue my passion by the sight of her?
But't is but one poore look. and so farewell.

Enter SELEUCUS.

Seleucus.

Haile *Marcus Otho* Emperour of *Rome*,
Cæsar that shall bee.

Otho.

Ha!

Seleucus.

It is thy fate,
Which shall not bee prevented.

Otho.

Tell mee father
(For your predictions ever have been true)
Shall I behold *Poppæas* face againe,
When I have left the City?

Seleucus.

Never more. *Exit Seleu.*

Otho.

Never! a heavy doome yet I in lieu
Of her shall gaine the Empire of the world.
Juno will heale the wounds that *Venus* gives.

Enter POPPÆA.

See, there shee comes; her beauty waxes still,
Or else the sad conceit of never more
Seeing that face, makes it appeare more faire.
How dull the edge of Honour growes already!
Here could I stay, and like the Trojan Prince
Lockt in faire *Didoes* armes forget for ever
Th' *Italian* land, and all my future fame.
Him Jove admonish'd to depart from thence.
Mee the command of *Cæsar* forces hence,
And leaves no power in my election.
Farewell *Poppæa*.

P

Poppæa.

Oh hard fate in love
Is mine, whose joyes were never lasting yet.
Speake not so soone that killing word farewell.

Otho.

What gaine, alas, can one small minute bee?
Or if twere gaine to mee, to the *Poppæa*
Twere losse to keepe thee from thy *Cæsars* sight.
Hee is thy servant, whom the world obeyes.

Poppæa.

Ah *Otho*, love can witnesse that this fortune
Was never sought by mee.

Otho.

Thou wert too great
A treasure for a privat man to keep.
No; live still happy with thy *Cæsar* here
And grant mee one request; if of that love
Which once wee vow'd so deare, there yet remaines
So small a part as may deserve the name
Of comon friendship, use thy power with *Cæsar*
My goverment may be continu'd long.

Poppæa.

Rather let mee intreate the contrary,
And keepe thee here at *Rome*.

Otho.

It must not bee.
Never while *Nero* lives, and lives with thee.
It must bee love no more, but friendship now
Twixt us *Poppæa*, which may still bee kept
In absence by good wishes, and without
Those nearer comforts which fond love requires,
But who shall teach mee to forget that sweet
Delicious lesson which loves schoole did teach,
When thy admired beauty was the booke,
And I a Scholler too too forward then?
Oh would great *Cæsars* power to cure my wound,

Could but bestow so privative a good
As losse of memory. but that, alas,
Were too unjust a cure, and I could wish
Rather to suffer still then quite forget
That I was once *Poppæes* envi'd love.
I'll rather strive to solace my sick soul
With contemplation of past happinesse,
And by recounting ore our former joyes
Deceive those houres of sorrow I must passe.
Pop. And I for comfort of our absent love
Will cherrish hopes that wee shall meet againe.
Oth. No, thinke mee dead, bright love, and I'll enforce
My imagination to beleeve that thou
Translated by some amorous Deity
Hast left the earth to beautify the sky,
And turne Astronomer in love, to finde
Thy figure out among those radiant lights
Which *Joves* transformed Paramours have made.
'Mongst those I'll seeke for faire *Poppæaes* starre,
And sweare I see it, rather then beleeve
Thou liv'st on earth debarr'd from *Otho's* sight.
I must begin to part, *I* see; for thou
In modesty art loath to chide mee hence,
And bid mee quit the place. Farewell *Poppæa.*
Such height of happinesse mayst thou enjoy
As *Cæsars* constant love can bring to thee.
Pop. As much good fortune follow *Otho* still
Tis power that parts us all the Gods can tell *Exit Oth.*
How well *I* love thee *Otho.* but those Gods,
That have ordain'd another fate for mee
Must bee obey'd yet *Nero* must bee wrought
With cunning to my ends, or else my fortune
Is low and poore, my title nought at all.
Tis not the love of *Cæsar*, but the honour,
And that high title which attends his love
That is *Poppæaes* aime, *Octavia*

Debar

Debarres mee yet from that, and *Agrippina*
Is fierce, and keeps her ſonne in Pupillage.

Enter NERO.

Nero.

Now faire *Poppæa*, thou art mine alone;
Otho's remov'd, embrace the happy change
That fortune brings thee, thou haſt found inſtead
Of him, a *Cæſar*, who beſides his ſtate
Has brought a heart as true to thee, and love
As ſtrong and fervent as poore *Otho's* was
Thou wert before a diamond conſtly ſet,
A clouded ſtarre. the Fates did pitty thee,
And would no longer let that beauty ly
Eeclippſed in a private family
No ſeat but *Romes* Imperiall throne, no ſphære
But *Cæſars* armes were fit for theſe bright eyes
To ſhine in, and the ſubject world t'adore
Their luſtre, like ſome conſtellation
New riſen to amaze mortality.
Not *Rome* alone, but all the fartheſt ſhores
That *Peleus* ſilver-footed wife ere knew
Shall call *Poppæa* miſtreſſe.

Poppæa.

Thoſe are honours
Cæſar, too high, too great for mee to hope.

Nero.

To hope, my love, they are thine owne already.

Poppæa.

Cæſar, thou know'ſt it cannot bee; and I
That might have liv'd content with *Otho's* love;
And there enjoy'd the honour'd name of wife,
Muſt in the Palace find a baſer ſtile.

Nero.

Thou wrong'ſt my power, *Poppæa*, if thou thinke
I cannot give the higheſt ſtile to thee:
And if thou thinke I meane it not, thou wrong'ſt

My truest love

Poppæa.

Octavia is alive
No love of thine can beare *Augustus* state
But onely shee

Nero.

Shee shall bee soon remov'd
To make a roome for faire *Poppæaes* honour.
Nor will the *Senate* dare to grumble at it.

Poppæa.

Though all were silent else, fierce *Agrippina* *Xiphilin*
Would in that act controll thee, and thinke mee
To meane for *Cæsars* wife, though I am sprung
(For I may speake a truth that *Rome* can witnesse)
From noble and triumphant Ancestors.

Nero.

There, love, thou strik'st upon the truest string.
That *Agrippina* was my greatest feare,
Though now shee is not; for I'll tell it thee,
If *Anicetus* stratagem have taken,
Ere this shee wanders on the Stygian shore.
Weary I was of her imperious pride,
And fear'd her cruell plots. How that succeedes
Is now my greatest expectation.
Nor do I live till *Anicetus* come
And bring my safety in that womans death

Enter ANICETUS.

Poppæa.

See, *Anicetus* is return'd

Nero.

Speake man
What is my fate? thou carriest in thy voyce
The life and death of *Cæsar*

Anicetus

Your command
Was done, great *Cæsar*, but your mother scap'd.

Nero.

Nero.

Escap'd? how could it bee, but you were false,
And all confpir'd together to betray *Xiphilin.*
My life in saving hers? how could shee scape?

Anicetus.

Wee chose the night to act it in; but night,
Prov'd not so black as night; the starrs gave light,
No wind at all blew as wee lanched forth *Xiphilin*
Down in the Galley *Agrippina* lay,
And at her feet lay *Aceronia*
With joy discoursing of your curtesie,
And favour lately shew'd her, but when I
The watch-word gave, the covering of the place
Loaden with lead fell downe, and priest to death
Her servant *Gallus*. But when th' other part
By fortune stronger, broke not, nor the vessell
Was loos'd asunder, all beeing in amaze
The rowers straitway thought it best to weigh,
The galley at one side, and sinke her so
There *Aceronia* floating in the waves
Faining her selfe to bee the Empresse, cry'd
Helpe, helpe the Prince his mother. But the rowers
With poles, and oares straight kill'd her as shee swamme,
But *Agrippina* in a silence caus'd
By policy or feare, swamme to the banke,
Having received but one wound, and there
Succour'd by little barkes, through *Lucrine* lake
To her owne house was carryed at the last.

Nero.

Oh, I am lost and dead; I shall bee straight
Surpris'd and kill'd; shee 'll arme her slaves, and stirre
The souldiers up, or to the Senate-house
Complaine, and shew the wound shee has receiv'd
And tell the story there. What shall I doo?
Advise mee, my *Poppæa*, *Anicetus*,
Ha yet advise mee nothing but her death,

No other course is safe, *Nero* must dy
If *Agrippina.* live, call *Burrhus* to mee;
Send forth the souldiers to dispach her straight.

Poppæa

It is no action for a souldiers hand
Nor will the campe for brave *Germanicus*,
Her father's sake bee drawne to butcher her
Let *Anicetus.* finish the exploit
Hee has begunne.

Nero.

It must be so; go on
With thy religious act, good *Anicetus.*
Thou art obleig'd to finish it; or else
What thou hast done already, will procure
My ruine rather then security
Choose thee what aide thou wilt.

Anicetus

I have them ready.
Feare it not *Cæsar*, *Agrippinaes* dead.

Nero.

Oh comfortable voice! thou art the man
Thou only *Anicetus*, that bestow'st
The Empire upon *Nero.* to thy guift
I will acknowlegd it, and celebrate
This as my day of coronation.
What plot shall wee invent to hide the deede,
And put th' intent of murder upon her?
To bring you newes of her escape, I'll finde
A way to doo't, tis strange none yet come from her.
See *Agerinus* comes *Enter Agerinus.*

Agerinus.

All health to *Cæsar*
Augusta by the favour of the Gods
Has lately scap'd a strange and wounderfull
Danger at Sea.
Ani. *Cæsar* when any of her servants come

What meanes this ponyard *Anicetus lets fall a ponyard*
In *Cæsars* presence, *Agerinus*? *behinde Agerinus.*

Nero.

Treason. *Ziphilin.*
Shee sends to murder mee; dragge hence the slave,
And torture him to death.

Agerinus.

I am as free
From guilt in this as innocence it selfe.

Nero.

Hence with the villaine to his death, and thou
Deare *Anicetus*, forward with thy plot. *Exeunt*

AGRIPPINA, *brought in by Mnester, and* Seleucus, *shee sits.*

Agripina.

Leave mee alone; but bee not farre from mee. *Exeunt.*
Who would rely upon the gratitude
Of men? or trust the fruit of benefits,
That now behold, or shall hereafter reade
My wofull fortune? I, that have bestow'd
What ere the world containes, to bee possest
By impious *Nero*, in reward, expect
Nothing but bloody death twas too too true
That strange deceitfull galley was a plot
An impious engine made to murder mee,
As by the fiercenesse of the slaves, my wound,
And *Acroniaes* death it did appeare.
Can I expect that *Nero* should relent?
Or that the tyrant in a brothers blood
Embrew'd already, should not rather thinke
No mischeife can bee safe till fully done?
Oh had his thoughts beene good, had my escape
Beene gratefull to him, all the house ere this
With visitants, and clients had been fill'd
To aske and see how *Cæsars* mother did
Where now are all the haules the bended knees,

Low

Low proſtrate faces, and officious tongues,
That ſtrove in honoring *Agrippinaes* name?
Vaniſh'd alas, and nought but ſolitude,
Ill-boding ſilence, and neglect remaine
In this forſaken Palace. But too ſoone
Ay mee, I feare the approach of vilany.
What noiſe is that at doore! where are my ſervants?
Mneſter, Seleucus, Galla, Xenophon.
No anſwer made! are they departed too!
Then vaniſh all my hopes falſe world farewell
With all thy fading glories. But alas,
Whither from hence ſhall *Agrippina* fly?
What regions are there in the other world
But my injuſtice has already fill'd
With wronged Ghoſts? there young *Silanus* wanders,
Lollia Paullina and great *Claudius*
My murdred Lord, yet thoſe ſad ſpirits perchance
Abhorring *Nero's* baſe ingratitude,
And glutted with revenge, will ceaſe to hate
At laſt, and pitty *Agrippinas* ſtate.

Enter ANICETUS, OLOARITUS, *and others*

Ay mee, is *Anicetus*. come againe?
Then I am dead paſt hope, murder, helpe. help *Xiphilin*

Anicetus.

You gueſſe our buſineſſe right but tis in vaine
To call for helpe, your guards are farre enough.

Agrippina.

Oh hold your hands a while; heare mee but ſpeake
Conſider with your ſelves before you act
A deed ſo execrable as will ſtick
A laſting brand on your abhorred names.
This murder will bee famous through the world.
All men will fly your hated company.
Like birds of night ſhall you for ever hide
Youre guilty heads; or, which is worſe then that,
Nero himſelfe, who did command the deede,

(As you pretend) ſhall guerdon you with death,
And quit himſelfe by puniſhing of you.
O rather venter *Neros* frowne, and keepe
Your innocence.

Anicetus.

Can they bee innocent,
That diſobey their Prince his will?

Agrippina

But ſure
You did miſtake the Prince. I am his mother.
Twas I that gave him birth; nay more, that put
Into his hand the ſcepter of the world.
Could hee command my death?

Anicetus

Wee did not ſtand
Examining the cauſe.

Agrippina.

Then ſtrike this wombe
This tragicall, and ever curſed wombe,
That to the ruine of mankinde brought forth *Xiphilin.*
That monſter *Nero*, here, here take revenge.
Here Juſtice bids you ſtrike. let theſe ſad wounds
Serve to appeaſe the hatred of the earth
Gainſt *Agrippina* for dire *Nero's* birth.

ſhee dyes.

FINIS.

THE TRAGEDIE OF CLEOPATRA Queen of *Ægypt.*

Written by

THOMAS MAY *Esq;*

Luc.

quantùm impulit Argos,
Iliacasque domos facie Spartana nocenti
Hesperios auxit tantùm Cleopatra *furores.*

LONON,
rinted for *Humphrey Moseley,* and are
to be sold at his Shop at the *Princes*
Armes in St. *Pauls* Church-yard,
1654

The Speakers.

Antoniani, Ægytii, Cæsarei.

Marcus Antonius. Cleopatra, Cæsar Augustus.

Marcus Titius. Eira Marcus Agrippa

Munatius Plancus. Charmio. Cornelius Gallus.

C. Canidius Crassus. Achoreus. Pinnarius Scarpus.

Caius Sossius. Euphroneus.

Titius Domitius. Seleucus. Proculeius.

Lucilius. Glaucus. Thyreus.

Aristocrates. Mardio. Epaphroditus.

The Scene ÆGYPT.

THE TRAGEDIE OF *CEOPATRA.*

Actus Primus.

TITIUS, PLANCUS, CANIDIUS.

TITIUS.

SHame and diſhonour to the Roman name
A triumph held at Alexandria
Only to honour *Cleopatraes* pride ?

PL.

Ah *Marcus*, this Ægyptian Queen was (made
To be the ruine of *Antonius*.

CA.

To be the pleaſure of *Antonius*.

PL.

How can you jeſt *Canidius*, on a theame
So ſad ?

CA.

How *Plancus* can you prophecie
So ſadly on ſo merry an occaſion,

As is the love of Ladies?

TI.

Let *Canidius*
Have his own way, *Munatius*, tis in vain
To talk to him.

CA.

Would you could let me have
Antonius his way, upon condition
I ſuffer'd you to cenſure gravely of it,
And prophecie my ruine. But my Lords,
You were as good be merry too, and take
Your ſhare of pleaſure in th' Ægyptian Court.
You'l do no good with theſe perſwaſions.
He loves the Queen, and will do ſo in ſpite.
Of our morality.

PL.

Tis too too true,
That face of hers, that beauty in the bud
Not fully blown, in yeers of innocence
(If any yeers of hers were innocent)
Set off with no adulteriſme of art,
Nor cloath'd with ſtate and pompous Majeſtie,
But in a fortune clouded and diſtreſt
A wretched priſoner in her brother's Court,
Yet then I ſay that charming face could move
The manly temper of wiſe *Julius Cæſar*.
That *Mars* in heat of all his active warre,
When he purſu'd the flying *Pompey* hither,
His ſword yet reeking in *Pharſalias* ſlaughter
At ſight of her became a doting Lover:
And could we think that our *Antonius*
A man not maſter of that temperance
That *Cæſar* had, could finde a ſtrength to guard
His ſoul againſt that beauty now ſet off
With ſo much wealth and majeſty?

CA.

CA.

No ſurely.
I did not think *Antonius* was an Eunuch.
Nor could I have believ'd he had been worthy
To be a ſucceſſour in *Cæſar's* power,
Unleſſe he had ſucceeded him in her.
Great *Julius* noble acts in warre and ſtate
Aſſur'd the world that he was wiſe and valiant:
But if he had not falne in love with her
I ſhould have much ſuſpected his good nature.

PL.

Nay then, *Canidius*, it ſhall be yours.

CA.

Or what indeed were greatneſſe in the world
If he that did poſſeſſe it, might not play
The wanton with't? this Ægyptian Queen
Is a ſtate beauty, and ordain'd by fate
To be poſſeſt by them that rule the world.
Great *Pompey's* ſonne enjoy'd her firſt, and pluck'd
Her Virgin bloſſome. When that Family, *Plutarch.*
Whoſe ruine fill'd the World, was overthrown,
Great *Iulus* next came in as conquerour
To have his ſhare, and as he did in power,
Succeeded him in *Cleopatraes* love.
Now our *Antonius* takes his turn, and thinks
That all the legions, all the ſwords, that came
To make his greatneſſe up when *Julius* dy'd,
Could give no greater priviledge to him
Then power to be the ſervant to this Queen.
Thus whoſoere in Rome be conquerour
His laurell wreath is *Cleopatraes* love.
And to ſpeak juſtly of her, Nature teem'd
To build this woman for no meaner height.
Her ſoule is full of greatneſſe, and her wit
Has charms as many as her beauty has.
With Majeſtie beyond her ſex ſhe rules

Her ſpatious Kingdomes, and all neighbour Princes
Admire her parts. How many languages
Speaks ſhe with elegance? Embaſſadors
From th' Æthiopians, Arabs, Troglodites, *Plut.*
From th' Hebrews, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians
Have in amazement heard this learned Queen
Without the aid of an interpreter
In all their ſeverall tongues returne their anſwers;
When moſt of her dull predeceſſor Kings
Since *Ptolemæus Philadelphus* time
Scarce underſtood th' Ægyptian tongue, and ſome
Had quite forgot the Macedonian.

TI.

How well *Canidius* deſcants on this theame!

PLA.

I'll lay my life it pleaſes him; the man
Is deep in love, and pity tis he has
So great a rivall as *Antonius*.

CA.

Well uſe your wit upon me; but I doubt
If any man could ſearch your ſecret thoughts,
Tis envy, not morality that makes
You taxe his love, how gravely ere you talke.

TI.

But can *Canidius* think it ſhould be juſt
In our *Antonius* to forſake for her
His lawfull wife the good *Octavia*?

CA.

Then like a Roman let me anſwer, *Marcus*.
Is it become a care worthy of us
What woman *Antony* enjoys? have we
Time to diſpute his matrimoniall faults,
That have already ſeen the breach of all
Romes ſacred laws, by which the world was bound?
Have we endur'd our Conſuls ſtate and power
To be ſubjected by the lawleſſe arms

Of private men, or Senators proscrib'd,
And can we now consider whether they
That did all this, may keep a wench or no?
It was the crime of us, and Fate it self
That *Antony* and *Cæsar* could usurpe
A power so great; beyond which we can suffer
No more worth thinking of. Nor were't to us
Any great fortune if *Antonius*
Were honest of his body.

PLA.

Have we then,
Who have been greatest Magistrates, quite lost
All shew of liberty, and now not dare
To counsell him?

CA.

A shew of liberty
When we have lost the substance, is best kept
By seeming not to understand those faults
Which we want power to mend. For mine own part
I love the person of *Antonius*;
And through his greatest looseneſſe can discern
A nature here, honester then *Cæsars*.
And if a warre do grow twixt them (as surely
Ambition would ere long finde out a cause
Although *Octavia* had not been neglected)
Rather then Rome should still obey two Lords,
Could wish that all were *Anthony's* alone.
Who would, I think, be brought more easily
Then *Cæsar*, to resigne the government.

TI.

Would I could think that either would do so.
Here comes her servant *Mardio*. *Enter* Mardio.

MAR.

Noble Lords,
The Queen by mee entreats your company
At supper with the Lord *Antonius*.

CA.

Marcio return our humble ſervices,
Wee 'll inſtantly attend her. Now my friends,
Can you a while put off auſterity,
And rigid cenſures, to be freely merry ?

TI.

It may be ſo. Wee'll try what wine can do. *Exeunt.*

A Feaſt preparing. EUPHRONIUS, GLAUCUS, CHARMIO.

EU.

Glaucus, let more of this perfume be got.

GLA.

I have enough in readineſſe; or elſe
'Twould be too late to think on't now, the Queen
Is upon entrance.

EU.

Charmio, art thou ſure
Thoſe tapers ſtand juſt as the Queen commanded ?

CLA.

Tis the ſame order that *Antonius*
When laſt he feaſted here, ſo much admir'd;
And ſaid 'mongſt all the curioſities *Plutarch.*
That he had ſeen, the placing of thoſe lights.
Did not the leaſt affect him.

EU.

Though the Romans
In power and warlike ſtate exceed us farre,
Yet in our Court of Ægypt they may learn
Pleaſure and bravery, but art thou ſure
That all things here are well ?

CHA.

As exquiſite
As the Queens wiſh would have it. Mark they come.

A-

ACHOREUS *the Priest*, ANTONIUS, CLEOPATRA, CANIDIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS.

CLE.

To say, my Lord, that you are welcome hither
Were to disparage you, who have the power
To make your self so, what ere you see
In Ægypt is your own.

AN.

What Ægypt holds
If I be judge, not all the world besides
Can equalize.

CLE.

Will't please you take
Your place, and these your noble Roman friends?

AN.

Father *Achoreus*, sit you neer to mee.
Your holy Orders, and great age, which shews
The Gods have lov'd you well, may justly challenge
A reverence from us.

CLE.

Great *Julius Cæsar*
Did love my father well; he oft was pleas'd
At houres of leisure to conferre with him
About the nature of our Nile, of all
The mysteries of Religion, and the wonders
That Ægypt breeds.

ACH.

He had a knowing soule,
And was a master of Philosophy
As well as Warre.

AN.

How like the spangled sky
These tapers make the high-arch'd roofe to show?
While *Cleopatra* like bright *Cynthia*
In her full orbe more guilds the cheerfull night.

Shee's ſtill at full; yet ſtill me thinks ſhe vexes,
And grows more fair and more majeſticall.

CLE.

My Lords, you Romans, whoſe victorious arms
Have made you Maſters of the world, poſſeſſe
Such full and high delights in Italy,
That our poor Ægypt can preſent no pleaſure
Worth your acceptance: but let me entreat
You would be freely merry, and forgive
Your entertainment.

ANT.

'Tis an entertainment
That might invite and pleaſe the Gods. Me thinks,
Jove ſhould deſcend, while *Cleopatra's* here,
Diſguis'd for love, as once for fear he was,
When bold *Typhœus* ſcal'd the ſtarry sky,
And all the Gods diſguis'd in Ægypt lurk'd.
Love were a nobler cauſe then fear to bring him,
And ſuch a love as thine.

CLE.

If I could think
That ere great *Jove* did play ſuch feats as thoſe,
I'de now beleeve that he were here diſguis'd,
And took the noble ſhape of *Anthony*

ANT.

This complement ſo farre tranſcends, it leaves
No anſwer for a wit ſo dull as mine.

A Song.

NOt hee, that knows how to acquire
But to enjoy, is bleſt.
Nor does our happineſſe conſiſt
In motion, but in reſt.

The Gods passe man in blisse, because
They toile not for more height;
But can enjoy, and in their own
Eternall rest delight.

Then, Princes, do not toile, nor care;
Enjoy what you possesse.
Which whilest you do, you equalize
The Gods in happinesse.

TI.

Minutius Plancus, I was thinking now
How *Hannibal* was charm'd at Capua,
When that delicious place had mollifi'd
His rough and cruell soul, and made him learn
The lessons of soft love, and luxury.

PLA.

There was no cause, *Marcus*, for such a thought:
For our *Antonius* in the heat of all
His active life knew how to revell well.

ANT.

Let this soft Musique cease, and louder sound.
This second course is mine. Call in *Lucilius*.

Enter LUCILIUS *with three Crowns.*

Fair *Cleopatra*, for addition *Plutarch.*
To what thou hold'st, the world-commanding Rome
Presents these Crowns, and by my hand invests
Thee, *Cleopatra* Queen of wealthy *Cyprus*,
Of Cœlosyria, and Phœnicia.
Blush not, my Love, nor let Romes bounty force
Thy modesty: these Crowns from thy fair brow
Receive more lustre then they can bestow.

TI.

I think he need not greatly fear her bluſhing.

PLA.

No *Marcus* no; alas theſe petty Kingdomes
(Though too too great to be ſo ill beſtow'd)
Are not the ſcope of her ambitious aymes!

CLE.

My Lord, I dare not make excuſe, or plead
Unworthineſſe, where once *Antonius* wiſdome
Has made election to conferre his favours.

ANT.

Admire not, friends; the God-like power of Rome
Is more declar'd by what it gives away *Plutarch.*
Then what it holds. But theſe are ſtill our owne
And *Cleopatra* Romes deſerving friend.

CA.

I cannot chooſe but think how fit a ſtate
For *Cleopatra Cyprus* Kingdome is;
And ſhall believe that it was ominous
That noble *Julius Cæſar* after all
Thoſe foure rich triumphs which he held at Rome
When he reſolv'd with like magnificence
To build a Temple to the Goddeſſe *Venus*,
From whom his houſe derive their pedigree
Within his ſtately Temple, to expreſſe
The Image of that Goddeſſe, he ſet up
Fair *Cleopatraes* figure in the place
Suppoſing her to be the Queen of Love.
You know my Lord Antonius, this is true.
And Cyprus ever was fair *Venus* Ile.

AN.

'Twas well obſerv'd noble *Canidius.*

CA.

Fill me ſome wine. Health to the Cyprian Queen.

AN.

Drink it to me *Canidius*; and I thank thee.
Let it go round, my friends.

CLE.

CLE.

I ever thought
My self much bound to brave *Canidius*
Since I was happy in his company.

AN.

How fit it is, no other *Cyprian* Queen,
But *Cleopatra* shall the Poëts know,
Whose fancies now shall raise that Kingdome higher.
More amorous now will *Paphos* mountains show,
And all those flowery Meads, the Fields of love,
Ore which no windes but Western ever blow.
The aire it self will yield a sweeter breath
While *Cleopatra* reignes the Cyprian Queen.

PLA.

How amorous in his language he is grown.

TI.

The times, I fear *Minutius*, will require
A rougher language shortly. We shall heare
Assoon as any news can come from Rome.

AN.

But long ago was I enforc'd to know
That *Cleopatra* was the Queen of love,
When first I met thee in Cilicia, *Plut.*
And down the silver stream of *Cydnus*, thou
In *Venus* shape cam'st sayling, while the aire
Was ravish'd with thy Musick, and the windes
In a norous gales did kisse thy silken sayls.
Thy maids in Graces habits did attend,
And boys, like *Cupids*, painted quivers bore,
While thousand *Cupids* in those starry eyes
Stood ready drawn to wound the stoutest hearts.

CLE.

You came like *Mars* himself in threatning arms
To ruine me, and my poor Country then.
I took that shape, because I knew no strength
No power on earth was able to resist
The conquering fury of *Antonius*.

AN.

AN.

That face of thine resisted me, and did
So sweetly conquer, I was proud to yield;
And more rejoyc'd in that captivity,
Then any Roman in a triumph did. *Enter* Hipparchus.
How now, what news with thee?

HIP.

Letters from Rome, my Lord.

AN.

From whom?

HIP.

Geminius.

AN.

To morrow wee'll peruse them. No affairs
Of what import or height so ere, shall have
Power to disturbe the pleasures of this night.
Our theam to night is love, which oft has made
The Thunderer himself a while lay by
The weary burden of his government.
Come lead away.
'Twere fit to read them now.
None knows what gain a little time may be

AN.

You may peruse them *Titius*; lead away. *Exeunt.*

Manent TITIUS, PLANCUS.

Can no affairs of what import so ere
Break one nights pleasure? well *Antonius*,
The tottering state thou holdst, must be supported
By nobler vertues, or it cannot stand.

PLA.

Cyprus, Phœnice, Cœlosyria,
Three wealthy Kingdoms got with Roman bloud,
And our forefathers valour, given away
As the base hire of an adulterous bed.
Was *Cyprus* conquer'd by the sober vertue
Of *Marcus Cato*, to be thus bestow'd?

TI.

TI.

This act will pleaſe yong *Ceſar*.

PLA.

Twill diſpleaſe
The Senate, *Marcus*, and *Antonius* friends.

TI.

Alas, he knows not what true friendſhip means,
But makes his friends his ſlaves, and which is worſe
Slaves to his luſts and vices; could he elſe
Slight our adviſe ſo? men, whom Rome has ſeen
Wearing her higheſt honours, and of birth
As great as his. Unleſſe he change his minde
I ſhall believe my friendſhip was ill plac'd.
And ſtrive to place it better.

PLA.

This laſt act
Will quickly be at Rome.

TI.

They have enough
Already, noble *Plancus*; think you not
It will be cenſur'd that the Roman name
Was much diſhonour'd by that baſe ſurprize *Dio. Caſſ.*
Of *Artavaſes* the Armenian King? *Plutarch.*
Whom through the ſtreets of Alexandria
He led in triumph bound with golden chains
Forcing the captive King, (if all his threats
Could have enforc'd ſo much) proſtrate t'adore
Proud *Cleopatra*, as if all his acts,
And all the honour of his armes were due
To her and not to Rome. *Calviſius* too *plutarch.*
In Senate late accus'd him for beſtowing
On *Cleopatra* that ſo farre renown'd
And famous Library of Pergamus,
In which there were two hundred thouſand Books.
How many ſuch wilde actions have her charms
Enforc'd his weakneſſe to?

PLA.

PLA.

His Testament,
Which now at Rome the Vestall Virgins keep,
Of which we two are privy to the sealing,
Should it be known, would stirre all Romans hate,
Willing his bodie, though he dy'd at Rome, *Dio.*
To be interr'd at Alexandria, *Plutarch.*
But if a warre 'twixt him and *Cæsar* grow
(As needs it must, although not yet declar'd)
For *Cæsar* now is levying men and money
Through Italy, Spain, France and Germany,
Against what foe can his designe be bent
But our *Antonius*? if a warre I say
Twixt them should happen, tell me, noble *Titius*,
What should we do?

TI.

Fight for *Antonius*.

PLA.

True friend, were he himself, or were there hope,
Or possibility he could be so.
But shall our valour toile in sweat and bloud
Only to gain a Roman Monarchy
For *Cleopatra*, and th' effeminate rout
Of base *Canope*? shall her timbrels fright
Romes Capitoll, and her advanced pride
Tread on the necks of captive Senators?
Or, which is more, shall th' earths Imperiall seat *Dio.*
Remove from Rome to Ægypts swarthy sands?
For who can tell if mad *Antonius*
Have promis'd her, as *Caius Marius* once
Promis'de the Samnites, to transferre the state?

TI.

It may be so, his dotage is enough
To grant it her, her pride enough to aske it.
Minutius Plancus, in this whole discourse
Thou speak'st my very thoughts no more, here comes

Lu-

Lucilius, whither so fast? *Enter* Lucilius.

LU.

My Lords,
Down to the Fort to wait upon the Consuls,
The Roman Consuls both, *Titus Domitius*, *Dio.*
And *Caius Sossius* are from Rome arriv'd *Sueton.*
Here at Pelusium, what the matter is
Is not yet known.

PLA.

Wee'll go along with thee;
This now begins to look like businesse, *Marcus. Exeunt.*

Actus Secundus.

ANTONIUS, SOSSIUS, DOMITIUS, CANIDIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS, VENTIDIUS.

AN.

'Tis not the place, nor marble wals that make
A Senate lawfull, or decrees of power,
But convocation of the men themselves
The sacred order by true Magistrates.
Then Rome is here; here both her Consuls are,
Here are her axes, and her fasces born,
And no small number of that sacred order
Are here assisting, when the barbarous Gaules
Had taken Rome, when all the Senate fled,
And with *Camillus* their Dictator then

At *Veii* liv'd, Rome then at Veii was,
As now in Ægypt. Fathers, know the face,
Of your assembly, know your lawfull power.
Consult, decree, and act what ere may be
Happy, and prosperous for the Common-wealth.

SOS.

Whilst power of laws, whilst reverence of the Senate,
And due respect t' a Consuls dignity
Could give protection to the Consuls persons
We did maintain thy cause *Antonius*
Against proud *Cæsars* faction. Now since laws
Are put to silence, and the Senate forc'd,
The Consuls sacred priviledge infring'd
By rage and lawlesse armes, we are expell'd,
And suffer banishment to be restor'd,
And re-indeniz'd by thy conquering sword.
Now justly draw it. Fate approves thy cause,
And on thy conquest sets a glorious prize,
Greater then all thy former wars could give.
Sextus Pompeius, Marcus Lepidus
Are ruin'd both, and all competitors
Are tane away; Fortune has left but one
To share the world with thee; nor canst thou share
The world with him, his pride would barre thy right,
And *Cæsar's* glory dim *Antonius* light.
Thou canst not shine unlesse alone thou shine.
Or all the world, or nothing must be thine.

DOM.

The Consulship, that was design'd to thee,
The Senate have revoked, and decree
'Gainst *Cleopatra* warre, but meant 'gainst thee.
What would their malice dare *Antonius*,
Had Fortune frown'd, thy Kings and Provinces
Revolted from thee, that dare now provoke
Thy growing fortunes and assisting Gods?
Their injury has made thy quarrell just.

Be speedy then, and lose no time of action:

SOS.

Cæsar is needy; his Italian souldiers *Dio.*
Are apt to mutiny for want of pay, *Plutarch.*
And might with ease be tempted to revolt.

CAN.

We need them not; our strengths are greater farre
Then *Cæsar's* are; our præparations readier.
Nought but delay can question our successe.
Shall we decree the warre?

AN.

Stay noble Romans;
Before we publish a Decree, or shew
The reason our arms so justly tane;
Weigh but with me the means and strength we have.
Know worthy friends it is no desperate warre
Your valours are engag'd in; briefly thus:
Our Roman strength is nineteen Legions.
Ten Kings in person will attend our Camp,
The Kings of Africk, Comagena, Thrace, *Plutarch.*
Upper Cilicia, Paphlagonia,
Of Cappadocia, Pontus, Palæstine,
Of rich Arabia, and Galatia.
Our strength at Sea five hundred fighting ships
Well rigg'd and mann'd: our treasuries are full;
And twenty thousand talents to the warre
Does *Cleopatra* freely contribute.
Why speak I more? the Crown of all my strength,
Your loves and spirits are. The injuries
On which we ground our just and lawfull warre,
Are briefly these. *Cæsar* unjustly holds
Those Provinces, and armies all, that late *Dio.*
Belong'd to *Pompey* and to *Lepidus* *Plutarch.*
Refusing to divide them, or deliver
The moity which appertains to me
Though oft demanded by my friends at Rome,

And

And letters from my self: besides he levies
Both men and money ore all Italy,
Which country, as you know, by our agreement
Belongs to both, and should be held in common.

TI.

Most true.

CA.

These wrongs are past all sufferance.
Thy warre is but defensive, to regain
Thine own unjustly taken.

DOM.

The warre's just.

SOSS.

And *Cæsar* the beginner of these broyls
From whom the wrong first sprung, most justly may
Be judg'd an enemy to the peace of Rome.

AN.

If Fortune aid us in a cause so just,
And we return victorious, noble Romans,
I make a vow, and let it be recorded,
Within two moneths after the warre is ended, *Dio.*
I will lay down the government I hold,
And freely then resigne my power again
Unto the Senate and the people of Rome.

SOSS.

Let it be six moneths rather; for two moneths *Dio.*
Will be too short a time to settle it.

DOM.

Sossius speaks well, my Lord.

ANT.

Let it be so,
And all the Gods assist me as I mean
A just and true performance.

CA.

All the Gods
Preserve *Antonius* father of his Country.

OMN.

OMN.

Author and Champion of our liberty.

Exeunt. manent TITIUS, PLANCUS.

TI.

Let them believe that liſt; for me, I think
The reſignation of a power ſo great
Will be a temperance too great for him
Ere to expreſſe.

PLA.

Or if he would, he muſt
Aske leave of *Cleopatra*, and her pride
Will hardly grant him that.

TI.

Nor will I fight
To make her Miſtris of the world and him.
Have you conſider'd, noble friend of what
We lately ſpake?

PLA.

And am reſolved *Marcus*.
The friends and followers we ſhall bring with us
Will make us welcome gueſts to *Cæſars* ſide.
It ſeems the City favours *Cæſar* much
That both the Conſuls fled from Rome for fear.
Nor is our action baſe; the ſcorns and wrongs
We have endur'd at *Cleopatraes* hands *Plutarch.*
Would tempt a moyle to fury, and both ſides
Stand equall yet.

TI.

Come let's away; tis time. *Dio.*

PLA.

Ægypt farewell.

TI.

Farewell *Antonius*. *Exeunt.*

SE-

SELEUCUS, GLAUCUS.

SE.

How ſuddenly the Scene is changed here
From love and banquets to the rough alarms
And threatning noiſe of warre!

GLA.

The change, *Seleucus*
Is not ſo ſuddain as you ſpeak; this ſtorm
Has been expected long; the two great Lords
Of all the Roman world, *Antonius*
And *Ceſar* have in heart been enemies
Theſe many yeers; and every man has wonder'd
'T has been withheld ſo long, conſidering
How much complaining has been daily made
By them, their friends, and factions 'gainſt each other:
Whoſe cauſe is juſteſt let the Gods determine.

SE.

No other juſtice then ambition
Makes them to draw their ſwords; no other cauſe
Then that the world cannot endure two Suns.

GLA.

The thing that troubles me, *Seleucus*, is
I hear it ſpoken in the Court, the Queen
Her ſelf in perſon will aſſociate
Antonius to the warre.

SE.

I hear that rumour;
But hope it is not true, how nakedly
And in what great confuſion would this land
Be left! and what addition can her perſon
Among ſo many Roman Legions
Bring to *Antonius*?

GLA.

Let us enquire
The certainty; I fain would be reſolv'd.

SE.

SE.

I on neceſſity muſt know, before
The Queen can go, that order may be taken
About the Fort I keep, what ſtrength ſhe means
To leave within it in her abſence.

GLA.

True,
That reaſon will excuſe thee for enquiring. *Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA, CANIDIUS.

CLE.

Noble *Canidius*, I'll entruſt no more,
Nor uſe more circumſtances; for I know
To whom I have referr'd my buſineſſe,
And truſt your wiſdome.

CA.

Royall *Cleopatra*.
I am ſo fortify'd with reaſons now *Plutarch.*
That maugre *Seſſius* and *Domitius*
With all their beſt perſwaſions, I'll prevaile
You ſhall not ſtay behinde; fear it not Madam.

CLE,

Brave Roman, wear this jewell for my ſake;
And be poſſeſt of *Cleopatraes* love.
Second my ſuit, there lies not in my power
A thing to grant I ſhould deny *Canidius*.

CA.

The favours, Madam, you can give, have power
T'oblige the greateſt Monarchs of the World.

CLE.

Be ready, worthy friend; he'll ſtraight be here, *Exit* Can.
None but *Canidius* has the power to work
Antonius in this action, which the reſt
Will all oppoſe, I know; a thing on which
My ſtate, my hopes, and fortunes all depend.

He

He must perswade *Antonius* to take
Me with him to the warre; for if I stay
Behinde him here, I run a desperate hazard;
For should *Octavia* enterpose her self
In this great warre (as once before she did)
And make her brother, and her husband friends
Wher's *Cleopatra* then? but here he comes.

ANTONIUS, CLEOPATRA.

AN.

Sweet *Cleopatra*, I should plead excuse
For leaving thee awhile, but that the cause
Is of a nature so immense and high,
And brings effects of such advantage home,
That thou I know art pleas'd it should be so;
And with a patience canst resolve to bear
So small an absence, that my wish'd return
May call thee mistris of the subject world.

CLE.

Cannot *Antonius* then be fortunate
If *Cleopatra* go? is there in me
So bad an *Omen*? did I think there were,
Nor for the world would I desire to bear
You company but rather die at home.

AN.

Farre are my thoughts from giving entertainment
To such fond dreams. I would not venture thee.

CLE.

My life and fortunes both depend on yours.
As much in Ægypt will my danger be,
As in your army, and my torment more,
To die each houre for feare: and to remain
In sad suspence till messengers can bring
The news so farre: but if my company
Distast my Lord, I cannot wish his grief.

AN.

AN.

Can *Cleopatra* think her heavenly presence,
Can be distastfull, or not valued more
Then all joys else; parted from thee I think,
All places sad, all lands disconsolate,
Before this life I prize thy company,
But must not have it now, do not entreat;
I have deny'd it to my self already.
And in the Camp should be asham'd to rise
From *Cleopatraes* arms, when wars rough noise
Shakes all the world, when Kings and Senators
Are venturing lives and fortunes in my service.
Oh stay behinde! and let thy presence make
Ægypt a place, to which I would desire
If *Cæsar's* fortune conquer, to retire.

CLE.

If that should happen (which the Gods avert)
What land, alas! could comfort me, or lend
A safe retreat to vanquish'd *Antony?*
Thou would'st disdain to draw a wretched breath,
And I as much should scorn captivity.
But I had thought the Roman *Antony*
Had lov'd so great a Queen with nobler love;
Not as the pleasure of his wanton bed
Or mistris only of some looser houres,
But as a partner in his highest cares,
And one whose soul he thought were fit to share
In all his dangers, all his deeds of honour.
Without that love I should disdain the other.

AN.

Do not mistake me, noble Queen, I know
Thy breast is full of high heroike worth.

CLE.

How can you think it so, that could so long
In times of peace and pleasure recreate
Your self with me in Ægypt Court; yet now

When honour calls, reject my company?

AN.

I should desire it rather then my life;
But that my Roman friends are all against it.

Enter SOSSIUS, DOMITIUS, CANIDIUS.

See here they come, if they agree tis done.
Now noble friends on whose oraculous counsels
And matchlesse valour my whole fate depends,
Speak what you think, should *Cleopatra* go
In person to the warre, or stay behinde?

SO.

I have delivered my opinion,
And so has my Colleague.

AN.

What thinks *Canidius*?

CA.

I think tis fit, my Lord, the Queen, whose bounty
Has brought so great assistance to the warre,
Should not be left behinde, besides her presence
Will much encourage her Ægyptian souldiers,
Of which a great part of the fleet consists. *Plutarch.*

AN.

Tis true *Canidius*.

CLE.

Let not my sex
Disparage me, for which of all those Kings
That now in person serve *Antonius*
Have more experience in affairs of weight
Then I, my Lord, which have so long been privy
To your high counsels, and in love to you
And your designes who should compare with me?

AN.

What think you friends? you heare *Canidius*.

DOM.

If you be pleas'd, I will subscribe.

SO.

SOS.

And I,
Since things go so.

CLE.

My wishes are effected.

AN.

Titius, and *Plancus* are both fled to *Cæsar*.

CAN.

You shall not need their help my Lord, at all.

AN.

Come, let's away.

CLE.

My strengths are ready all,
And wait but your command.

AN.

Spoke like *Bellona*.
Canidius, return you to your charge
And bring those sixteen Cohorts down to sea; *Plutarch.*
Meet me at Samos with them, both the Consuls
Shall go along with me. Great Father *Mars*,
And all you Gods, that from the skies behold
The Roman labours, whose propitious aid
Advanc'd my fortunes to so great an height,
Make perfect that, which you your selves begun.
This is the swords last work, the judging houre
Of Nations fates, of mine and *Cæsar's* power.
On which the stars and destinies attend,
And all the fortunes of Mankinde depend. *Exeunt*

ACHOREUS.

What dire portents sent from the wrathfull Gods?
Threaten th'astonish'd world? What plagues are those
Which in the skies prodigious face I read?
Tumultuous Nature teems with monstrous births,
As if the throws would break her labouring wombe.

What ruine leſſe then *Chaos* ſhall involve
The mourning face of Nature? what great fate,
What kinde of miſchief is it? oh ye Gods,
Why did you adde to wretched men a care
So paſt their ſtrength to bear, to let them know
By ſad preſages their enſuing woe?
Unknown and ſecret let your vengeance be,
And none foreſee their following miſery;
But hope as well as fear. *Jove* hide thy dooms;
Keep ſhut, oh fates, your adamantine books!
Let not the bainfull curioſity
Of humane knowledge ſearch your ſecret counſels,
And read your purpoſes, to nouriſh ſo
A killing fear before the danger grow.

Enter SELEUCUS, GLAUCUS.

SE.

That Comet's gone.

GLA.

It mov'd directly upward,
And did not vaniſh till it ſeem'd to reach *Dio.*
The firmament.

ACH.

What talk you of my ſonnes?

GLA.

That Comet, father, ore the Græcian Sea.

ACH.

It was a ſtrange one both for form and greatneſſe,
And bodes ſome miſchief wherſoere it light.
The Gods avert it from our Ægypts coaſt.

SE.

Pinnerius Scarpus had received news
That Italy and Rome it ſelf are fill'd
With prodigies: an ugly Owle of late *Dio.*
Did fly into the houſe of Concord firſt,

Phenice-

Thence being driven away it pearch'd again
Within the Temple of the peoples *Genius*.
There, though all striv'd, it neither could be caught,
Nor driven away, but flew at leisure out.
A sacred Trophey on Mount Aventine, *Dio.*
Victoriaes Image on the Theater *Dio.*
By suddain tempests were thrown down and broken.

GLA.

In Rome and other parts of Italy
Sudden and strangely kindled fires have done
Exceeding waste; and we are certifi'd
That now Sicilian Ætna nourishes *Dio.*
More horrid flames then usually it does,
And farther casts his scorching entrails forth,
Blasting the fields and burning up the corn.

SE.

A two-legg'd Dragon in Etruria *Dio*
Full fourscore foot in length was lately seen,
Which after much annoyance of the Country
It self with lightning was consum'd at last.
But these portents do threaten Italy.

ACH.

Alas, my sonne, there need no prodigies
To shew the certain losse of Italy.
For on both sides do Roman Eagles stand,
And Rome must bleed who ere be conquerour,
Besides her liberty for ever lost
When this sad field is fought: but that's not all.
What clime so farre, what region so remote,
But that the Roman fortune reaches thither?
All nations share in this.

GLA.

What hast thou got
By all thy conquest Rome, by all the bloud
Which thy ambition through the world has shed,
But rais'd a power, which now thou canst not rule,

Nouriſh'd a Lion to devoure thy ſelf?

SE.

Would none but Roman bloud might quench the fire
Of Romes diſſentions, and no land beſide
Be forc'd to pay the forfeit of their pride.
With evill *Omen* did Æneas firſt
Tranſport the reliques of Troyes fatall fire
To Italy, that kindled greater there
It might at laſt like lightning through the world
Rend every Nation. Was it not enough,
That firſt your conqueſts ſtrew'd the earth with ſlaugh-
And dy'd all Regions with their natives blouds, (ter,
But your diſſentions ſtill muſt tear the world?

ACHO.

I'll go within, and make an offering
To great *Oſiris.* *Exit* Achoreus.

GLA.

Well may it ſucceed.
Ægypt will flouriſh if *Antonius* conquer.

SE.

If he ſhould fall, the fury of the warre
Would light on Ægypt moſt, and we ſhould rue
That ere *Antonius* lov'd this hapleſſe land.

Enter MARDIO.

Oh Gentlemen, the ſtrongeſt news, that ere
Was ſeen in Ægypt.

GLA.

What's that *Mardio?*

MAR.

Thouſands of people with aſtoniſhment
And fear beheld it: on thoſe fruitfull plains
That Southward ly from Alexandria,
Where never rain was known to fall before, Dis.
It rain'd whole ſhowers of bloud, whoſe colour ſet

A

A purple die upon thoſe verdant fields;
And in the clouds that horrid noiſe was heard
That meeting armies make, beating of drums.
Shrill trumpets ſound, armor againſt armor claſhing,
As if the bloud that fell, dropp'd from the wounds *Dio.*
Thoſe aëry battails made.

GLA.

This is more ſtrange
Then all the reſt: this is our own *Seleucus.*

SE.

Well Gentlemen, I'll to Peluſium,
And fortifie the town to keep our foes,
If foes be conquerours, from entring there.

GLA.

Yes, and our friends, if they be vanquiſhed,
Keep out our friends, *Seleucus*, for their preſence
May pluck a warre, and ruine on our heads.

SE.

As there's occaſion wee'll determine that.

Enter ACHOREUS.

Avert your anger, Gods, if all too late
Our prayers came not now.

GLA.

What is it father?
Your looks, I ſee, are full of ruth and wo.

ACHO.

Ah wretched Ægypt, ah unhappy land
In what haſt thou ſo ſtor'd the wrath of heaven?
The grieved God refus'd his offering
Bellowing aloud that all the Temple rung,
And from his ſacred eys the tears run down.
Would I could contradict, or not beleeve
The skill which ſureſt obſervations teach.
This ſignifies a change of government.

GLA.

What heaven is pleas'd to send, we much endure.

ACO.

True sonne; and let a wise man place his strengths
Within himself, nor trust to outward aids.
That whatsoever from the Gods can come
May finde him ready to receive their doom. *Exeunt.*

Actus Tertius.

Enter PINNARIUS SCARPUS *with Souldiers.*

PIN.

TIs not *Antonius*, worthy souldiers,
But Rome herself to whom you owe your valours.
What he could claim, you have perform'd already;
And serv'd him truly, whilst he was to you
A Generall, to Rome a Magistrate.
You are discharg'd from all obedience
You ow'd to him, by fate it self, and may
Nay, ought to follow him, whom Roman fates
Appoint your Generall, the noble *Cæsar*
Great *Julius* heir, not to his name alone
But spirit and fortunes, which have both appear'd
In this so great and finall a defeat
Given to *Antonius*. Before we knew not

To

To whom the Gods and Fortune had assign'd
Our service souldiers; now they have declar'd.
And let us follow where they please to lead.
For faith is impious striving to sustain
That side, whose fall the Gods themselves ordain.

SOL.

Cæsar, Cæsar, Cæsar.

PIN.

Your judgments guide you right; for could you think
So small a strength as ours could raise again
The desperate state of faln *Antonius*,
Under whose ruine all those legions sunk?
What madnesse were it, souldiers to preferre
A hopelesse civill warre before the weal
And peace of Rome? and desperatly provoke
The prosperous fortunes of victorious *Cæsar*?
I have already to *Cornelius Gallus* *Dio.*
By letter signify'd our purposes.
Who sent from *Cæsar* now is marching hither,
To joyn his strength with ours: but hark his Drum
Give notice of his comming.

Enter GALLUS.

Hail *Pinnarius*.

PIN.

Ah hail *Cornelius Gallus*,
Most wish'd for, an most happily arriv'd
At Parætonium.

GAL.

Victorious *Cæsar*
With love and favour greets *Pinnarius Scarpus*,
Cæsar, then whom the world acknowledges
No other power; whom Fortune now has made
Sole Lord of all.

PI.

I, and my ſouldiers
With Parætonium are at *Cæſar's* ſervice.
Whither's *Antonius* fled?

GAL.

Hither to Ægypt
With *Cleopatra*? 'Twas a victory
So ſtrangely given away, as not the like
In former times I think has ere been heard;
On which eſpecially ſo great a price
As the ſole ſway of all the world depended.
The Fleets encountred both, while with the Camps
On either ſhore ſtood to behold the fight, *Dio.*
Heer the Cæſarian, there the Antonian Fleet
With equall hopes came on, with fury equall.
And long maintain'd a ſharpe and cruell fight,
With mutuall ſlaughter, while the Oceans face,
Was forc'd to loſe his colour, and receive
A crimſon die. The ſhips *Antonius* had
Were tall, and ſlowly did like Caſtles move.
But *Cæſar's* ſmall, yet quick and active, ſtirr'd *Dio.*
On every ſide with all advantages. *Florus.*
Long fortune doubted, and bright victory *Plutarch.*
Knew not which way to lean, but kept them both
In equall ballance; till *Antonius*
Himſelf at laſt betray'd his glorious hopes.
For when his Miſtris *Cleopatra* fled, *Plutarch.*
Although a while within his manly breaſt *Dio.*
The Roman honour ſtrove 'gainſt wanton love, *Florus.*
Love got the conqueſt, and *Antonius*
Fled after her, leaving his ſouldiers there
To ſell their lives in vain; who many houres
Though he were fled, made good the navall fight.
And had *Antonius* ſtay'd, it may be fear'd
Cæſar had not prevail'd: at laſt the Fleet
Wanting their Admirall, though not without

Much

Much ſlaughter, fled, or yielded all to *Cæſar*.

PIN.

But what became of all his ſtrength on land?

GAL.

Nay, there's the wonder, there's *Antonius* madneſſe,
And ſuch a madneſſe as will ſtrike amazement
To all that heare it told: after his flight
He neere return'd, though in the campe he had
Under the conduct of *Canidius*
And other Captains nineteen legions
Freſh and unfought, which might with reaſon hope
Had he been there, to have recover'd all.
They ſtill remayn'd encamped, and though oft
Sollicited by *Cæſar* to revolt
Were kept from yielding, by *Canidius*
In hope of *Anton*y's return. Untill
Canidius fearing his own ſouldiers minds *Plutarch.*
And *Cæſar*'s anger fled away by night,
They then deſpairing yielded all to *Cæſar*.
Who by this time I think's arriv'd in Ægypt.
About Peluſium.

PI.

Will you view the town?

GAL.

With all my heart, noble *Pinnarius*. *Exeunt.*

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, THYREUS, APHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS.

Cæ.

Antonius then with *Cleopatra*'s fled
To Alexandria.

AGR.

'Tis certain, *Cæſar*.

PHA.

They say the vanquish'd Queen most cunningly: Dio.
(Fearing it seems, to be excluded else
From her own Kingdome) fain'd her self victorious,
Landing in Ægypt with triumphant songs
Her ships all crown'd with laurell, to deceive
The credulous people: where being enter'd once
She leaves unpractis'd no strange tyranny;
And, as we hear, to win the Parthan King
Unto her side, beheaded *Artavasdes* Dio.
King of Armenia, and the Parthians so,
Who was her prisoner, that *Artavasdes*,
Whom *Anthony* so basely had surpris'd.

TI.

Cæsar, 'twere fit to take Pelusium
Before we march to Alexandria.

Cæ.

'Twas our intent, good *Titius*, not to leave
A town of that import behinde our backs.
Go *Proculeius*, summon it, and know
Whether her Governour will yield or no. *Exit.* Proc.

Enter Servant.

What news with thee?

SER.

Cæsar, a messenger
From *Cleopatra* craves admittance.

Cæ.

Bring him.

Enter EUPHRONIUS.

Queen *Cleopatra* to great *Cæsar* wishes
All health and victory; and humbly proffers
Her self and all her fortunes to his service: Dio.
In token of which she here presents by mee

This

This Crown and Scepter.

TI.

Brave and ominous.

EUP.

Humbly entreating *Cæsar's* noble favour
To her and hers; the rest of her desires
So please it *Cæsar* to peruse the same,
This letter holds.

PLA.

I warrant a love-letter.

Cæ.

But tell me first, where is *Antonius?*

EUP.

I'll truly tell (though it may seem to some
Incredible) that great *Antonius*
A man of late in conversation
So free, and full of jollity, in a strange
Deep melancholly has retir'd himself *Plut. Strabo*
To *Pharos* Ile; where like Athenian *Timon*, *lib. 17.*
Who did professe a hatred to mankinde,
And fled all company, he lives alone;
And on the solitary shore has built
A little house to feed his frantike humour,
And imitate that *Timon's* life, whose name
He takes unto himself: no friends at all
Nor servants are admitted to his presence,
But only two, Roman *Lucilio*.
And *Aristocrates* the Græcian.

Cæ.

Not *Cleopatra?* then I doubt the man
Grows weary of these worldly vanities.

AGR.

I never heard of such a change as this.
Give me the letter. I'll peruse it now *He reads.*

AGRIPPA, AGR. CÆSAR. *they ruin.*

CÆS.

Here the woman writes
That for her liberty, and to confirme
The Crown of Ægypt to her self and children
To gratifie my favour she has hid *Dio.*
Within her pallace a great masse of gold. *Plutarch.*
Unknown t' *Antonius.*

AGRI.

'Tis like ennough,
For *Cleopatra's* rich, and long has been,
Besides the sacriledge she lately did
In robbing all the Temples of the Gods
About these parts.

CÆ.

I would not lose this gold,
Nor willingly let *Cleopatra* die
Before her person have adorn'd my triumph.

AGR.

That will be hard to bring to passe, and must
Be wrought with subtilty: you must not send
A threatning message back; for if you do,
All's lost, her life, her gold and all are vanish'd.
For *Cleopatra*, as in all her acts
It has appear'd, is of a wondrous spirit,
Of an ambition greater then her fortunes
Have ever been, though she so long have sway'd
A soveraignty ore half the Roman world,
Trod on the necks of humbled Kings, and rul'd
Antonius as her slave: her haughty spirit
Will never stoop so much as to a thought
Of such captivity.

CÆ.

I do not mean

To

To let her know my minde, or once ſuſpect
If I can help it, but I have it now.
Thyreus come hither; I muſt now rely
Upon thy wiſdome, care, and diligence
In an employment that concerns me neerly.
But I am confident: go with this fellow *Dio.*
To Alexandria; uſe to the Queen *Plutarch.*
Thy beſt and moſt perſwaſive Oratory.
Tell her I love her, and extremly dote
On her admired beauty, thou art wiſe
And need'ſt no great inſtructions; the ſucceſſe
I do not doubt, the woman's credulous,
And thinks all men are bound to be in love
With that inſnaring face; if thou perceive
She will be wrought on, winne her to betray
Antonius to my hand: the way to woo her
I leave good *Thyreus* to thy eloquence
And cunning working of it: ſpare thy reply *to* Euph.
Bid him come hither. Commend my hearty love
To *Cleopatra*; bid her fear no ill
From me at all. What I deſire from her
My freed man *Thyreus* has commiſſion
To utter to her ſelf. *Epaphroditus*,
Go ſee him well rewarded.

EPA.

Health to *Cæſar*. *Exeunt.* Epa. & Euph.

Enter PROCULEIUS.

The Governour is ſtout, and does reſolve
To ſtand th'extremeſt hazard of the warre
Before he yield Peluſium.

Cæ.

Let him rue
His ſtubborn loyalty, ſouldiers make ready
For the aſſault; 'tis ſhame ſo ſmall a town

Should

Should ſtay our fortune in the full carreer. *Exeunt.*

ANTONIUS *diſguis'd like* TIMON, *reading.*

Here bury'd do I lie; thou gentle wave Calli-
Keep hateſull man from treading Ti- mahi
mons grave. Epigr.
Reader be gone; enquire no more of me, de Ti-
A curſe upon thee whatſoere thou be. mone.

ANT.

Good, good; oh *Timon*, Athens nere could boaſt
A wiſe philoſoher but thee. Thou knew'ſt
The nature of all men, that all were falſe;
True *Timon*, true, they are all Knaves indeed.
Thou wiſely hat'ſt that wicked thing call'd man,
Whom other forced Philoſophers admire,
And call a noble creature, and partaker
Of divine nature: they were fools, fools *Timon*,
All other Sects were fools, and I will follow
No ſect but thine; I am a Timoniſt.
That's not enough, *Timon* himſelf I am.

Enter LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

Yonder he ſits, ſee *Ariſtocrates*
How much unlike that great *Antonius*,
Whoſe perſon late ſo many legions guarded,
So many Kings attended as their Lord.

ARI.

Antonius, where? thou art deceiv'd *Lucilius*,
That's *Timon* man.

LU.

How canſt thou jeſt at this
This wofull paſſion, which alone's enough
To melt his foes and *Ceſar* into tears.

ARI.

We feed this fooliſh paſſion, to give way,

And

And keep aloof thus. I'll go to him. *Timon*.

AN.

Ha! what art thou? be gone I say from me.
Get you to *Cæsar* man: I hate you all.

ARI.

I hate thee, *Timon*; doſt thou think 'tis love
Has brought me hither? I am come to vex thee.

AN.

Oh welcome, what's thy name? i'ſt *Alcibiades*?

ARI.

Haſt thou forgot me?

ANT.

Doſt thou hate all men?

ARI.

Why doſt thou think me ſo unnaturall
To love a man? but may we not love women?

AN.

Yes, they may be belov'd; provided always
That they be falſe.

ARI.

True *Timon*, wicked women
May be belov'd, becauſe they ruine men.

ANT.

Right, right; and now I better think upon't
I'll ſet no gallowſes or gibbets up
As I entended once, for men to come
And hang themſelves, I'll keep a bawdy houſe.

ARI.

A better way by farre, 'twill ruine moe,
I wonder, *Timon*, at that fooliſh plot
That I have heard, that in thy gardens once
In Athens thou did'ſt ſet up gallowſes
For men in diſcontent to hang themſelves.
How few think'ſt thou would be ſo mad to do it?
But to a wench they'll come, and then the office
That thou ſhalt have will be of more account.

For

For where have you a man of any fashion
That now adays turnes hangman ; but a Pandar
Is on employment that befits a Statesman,
A thing requires good parts and gravity.

ANT.

I'de try that course; but tis too slow a plot.
Oh for a speedy way to kill the world!
I have done somewhat in my days; my wars
And bloudy battels were not made in vain.
For I was once *Antonius*, and a Roman,
As in the wars of Troy *Pythagoras*
Before that transmigration of his soul,
Had been *Euphorbus*.

AN.

Thou art like him still.

ANT.

And when I was *Triumvir* first at Rome,

AN.

That was a time indeed, then I could heare
Of those good deeds, which must be still a comfort
To your good consciences, though they be past.
When Rome was fill'd with slaughter, flow'd with bloud.
But they perchance were Knaves that were proscrib'd,
And might have done more mischief had they liv'd.

AN.

No, they were honest men; I look'd to that.

ARI.

'Twas well, and carefully.

AN.

Behold the list.
But one among the rest most comforts me,
That talking fellow *Cicero*, that us'd
To taxe the vicious times, and was forsooth
A lover of his Country.

ARI.

ARI.

Out upon him,
Then he was rightly serv'd: for is it fit
In a well govern'd state such men should live
As love their Country? had 't not been for him
Catiline's plot had thriv'd.

AN.

Tis true, I'm sure
Cæsar was on that side, he favour'd it.

ARI.

Yes, *Cæsar* understood himself; ther's hope
That this young *Cæsar* too will prove as good
A Patriot as ere his father was.

ANT.

He will do reason man: he is of nature
Cruell enough; in that proscription
It did appear; but now he'll reigne alone.

ARI.

Oh for such factions as were then a foot
To rend the state, and fill the world with slaughter.

ANT.

Oh, let me hug thee *Alcibiades*.

Enter CANIDIUS, LUCILIUS.

CA.

Is that he yonder? what strange shape is that?

LU.

None talks with him but *Aristocrates*,
Who following his own way, and suiting just
With his conceit thinks to reclaim him so.

CA.

The news, that I shall bring, will make him worse,
And fright that little reason that is left
Quite from his brest.

LU.

LU.

It cannot ſo *Canidius*;
Perchance to hear th'extremity of all
Will cure his fit; it cannot make him worſe.
For death it ſelf were better and more noble.

CA.

How weak a thing is man that ſeats his hopes
In fortunes ſlippery, and unconſtant favours,
And ſeeks no ſurer ſtrengths to guard his ſoul?
Wanting a ſtrong foundation, he is ſhaken
With every winde, orethrown by every ſtorm.
And what ſo frequent as thoſe ſtorms in fortune?
Whoſe faireſt weather never brings aſſurance
Of perpetuity: but come what will
I'll tell him all.

LU.

Do, good *Canidius*.

ANT.

Well *Alcibiades*, I am reſolv'd
I'll to the wars again, and either conquer
Mine enemies, or take a courſe to ſtarve
And kill up my own ſouldiers, and ſo be
Reveng'd on ſome body: One of theſe two
May eaſily be brought to paſſe. How think'ſt thou?

ARI.

Yes, yes: but lets to Court, and there conſult.

Enter MARDIO.

See who comes here, now for our bawdy project.
Here is a ſervant I muſt needs preferre
Well vers'd in bawdry, Maſter of the art.
Come neer brave *Mardio*, come.

MAR.

My buſineſſe
Is not to you;

ARI-

ARI.

Mark him but well, and tell me
How he would execute the place.

MAR.

My Lord,
The Queen entreats your presence at the Palace,
The grieved Queen, who in your absence pines,
Who suffers in your grief.

ARI.

Well urg'd old *Eunuch.*

ANT.

Ha! what of her? will she revolt to *Cæsar?*

MAR.

She's farre from that, my Lord.

ANT.

What i'st he says?

ARI.

He says the constitution of her body
Cannot hold out unless you visit her.

MAR.

The Queen shall know it, *Arisiocrates.*

ARI.

Did you not say she pin'd and languish'd Sir,
And what's the difference? tell your tale your self.

ANT.

What does she say? does she not hate me man?

MAR.

Oh no my Lord, she loves you as her life.
No spite of fortune that she has endur'd,
Or can hereafter fear, grieves her so much
As does your absence and strange melancholy.

ARI.

Well *Mardio*, thou art fittest for the place.

CAN.

My Lord *Antonius?*

ANT.

AN.

Ha! mo men upon us?

CA.

I come to bring thee heavy news *Antonius.*
The forces all, which thou didſt leave encamp'd
At Actium, horſe and foot are gone to *Cæſar.*
And all th' auxiliary Kings; no ſtrength
At all is left thee, but what here thou haſt
At Alexandria.

AN.

Ha!

LU.

This ſinks into him.

CA.

It makes a deep impreſſion in his paſſion.

ARI.

And may perchance expell his other fit.

AN.

All you here yet! then I have friends I ſee.
But tell me, can you be ſo mercifull
As to forgive that moſt unmanly fit
I have been in? oh, I am all in bluſhes.

CA.

My Lord, take better comfort.

AN.

Deareſt friends.
I will be proof 'gainſt any fortune now. *Plutarch.*
Come let's together to the Court, and there
Drown ſadneſſe in rich cups of Meroë wine,
And laugh at Fortunes malice, for your ſight
More cheers my ſpirits, then her frowns can dull them.

Exeunt.

Actus

Actus Quartus.

CLEOPATRA, GLAUCUS.

GLA.

MAdam, all drugs with pain and torment kill
That kill with ſpeed. No eaſie way to death
Is wrought but by a ſlow and lingring courſe,
Where Natures ſtrength is by degrees ſubdu'd,
And yielding ſo decayes inſenſibly.
No art at all can make a drug that's quick
And gentle too. No poyſon but the Aſpe
Of all the mortall brood of Libyaes Snakes
Kils with a ſuddain, and yet eaſie death
As if brought forth to contradict our skill
By envious Nature, who diſdains frail man
Should hope to finde her ſecrets wholly out.
None but that Serpent, Madam, can effect *Plutarch.*
What you deſire; of which I here have brought.

CLE.

Leave it good *Glaucus*; leave the potion too.
Tis quick, thou ſayſt.

GLA.

Yes Madam; but too painfull
And violent.

CLE.

CLE.

Well leave them both with me: *Exit* Glaucus.
Let none adventure on prosperity
But with a spirit still prepar'd to die.
Let them keep certain death still in their power
That dare be great and happy, nought but that
Frees states when they are fall'n. Well did wise
And liberall Nature on mankinde bestow
A gift so soveraigne as power to die,
An Antidote 'gainst Fortunes cruelty,
That is the deere preservative, that must
Controll the spite of Fortune, and redeem
A wofull life from lothed servitude.
One venome's gentle; tother rough and cruell.
But tis not safe to trust mine honour so,
On doubtfull props: the poysons both may fail,
Or differ farre from what vain fame reports
Their operation. Tis experience
That must confirme me. *Mardio* is return'd.

Enter Mardio *with two prisoners.*

MAR.

Here are two men, Madam, condemn'd for murder
To cruell death, and are to die to morrow.

CLE.

Come neerer both, and tell me, dare you die? *Dio.*

1 PRI.

Great Queen, necessities strict law imposes *Plutarch.*
That doom upon us; in forc'd actions
Courage can have no triall.

CLE.

Dare you die
A lesse dishonorable way, to scape
The common hangman's hand, and from a Queen
Receive your death, and that an easier death?

BOTH.

BOTH.

Most willingly, great Queen; we are prepar'd.

CLE.

Give them their lots, *Mardio*; the shorteſt lot
Is to die firſt.

2 PRI.

That lot is mine.

CLE.

The Aſpe ſhall be thy fate: now Aſpe confirme
What fame reports of thee; ſtay thou thy draught
Till he be dead: feel'ſt thou no pain?

2 PRI.

A faintneſſe ſeizes me, and I would ſleep.

MAR.

How gently he lies down? and ſcarcely ſtrives
Againſt his death at all.

CLE.

I think he's dead
Already. Sure he feels but little pain.
I am confirm'd.

MAR.

He's dead and ſtiffe already.

CLE.

Wee'll try no more, as for thy draught of poyſon
Thus we diſcharge thee of it, and from death
Doom'd by the law our royall pardon frees thee.
Publiſh it *Mardio*.

PRI.

The Gods preſerve
Royall and gracious *Cleopatra*'s life. *Exeunt.*

CLE.

I am reſolvd'; nought but the Libyan Aſpe
Shall be renown'd for *Cleopatra*'s death.
Thou precious worme, that canſt redeem alone
The loſſe of honour at a rate ſo eaſie,
That kill'ſt as gently as the hand of age,

And

And art miscall'd a plague of Africa,
Since thou alone mak'st barren Afrike envy'd,
By other lands, though fruitfull, wanting thee.
Who crosse the Seas, and hence at highest price
Transporr the Aspe as choisest Merchandise.
On thee I trust, one gentle touch of thine
Can free this life from lothed servitude,
From *Cæsar*'s triumph, the base peoples mocks,
Proud *Livia*'s scorn, and mad *Octavias* spight.
But why are all my thoughts turn'd to despair?
Why think I now of death? me thinks my *Genius*
Checks this cold fear, and Fortune chiding tels me
I am ungratefull to distrust, her now.
My race of life and glory is not run,
Nor *Cleopatras* fortunes yet arriv'd
At that great height that must eternize her,
And fix her glorious name aboue the stars.
I long to hear what answer *Cæsar* sends.
I do not know his temper, but he's young;
And why should I despair? are *Cupid*'s fires
Extinguish'd quite? are all his arrows spent?
Or is this beauty, that can boast the conquest
Of *Julius Cæsar*; and great *Antony*,
So waned now, it cannot move the temper
Of one, whom youth makes fit for *Cupid*'s conquest?

Enter EUPHRONIUS, THYREUS.

EUP.

Madam, your gifts were more graciously receiv'd,
And *Cæsar* with a smiling brow return'd
All seeming love and friendship: he has sent
His free'dman *Thyreus* to attend your highnesse,
And to impart his counsels to your care.

CL

CLE.

He's welcome to us. What's great *Cæsar's* will.

Exit Euphro.

THY.

Cæsar's best wishes, royall *Cleopatra*,
None but your fairest self can ratifie.
No power on earth can give what *Cæsar* wants
But you, great Queen. For let your Majesty
Give credit to poor *Thyreus* though the meanest
Of all the servants that attend on *Cæsar*,
Ther's none about him is more neer in trust
To whom he's pleased to impart his thoughts,
And secret wishes: nothing but your love
Can crown his happinesse.

CLE.

We are no subject
For *Cæsar's* mocks though in our worst of fortune.

THY.

You are the Queen of Fortune, and still hold
A lasting Scepter ore that sickle Goddesse
(Fickle to others, to you true and constant)
Your radiant light lends that blinde Goddesse eyes,
And guides her to your service, making all
Actions, nay losses steps to greater honour.
The late defeat at Actium, which your errour
Perchance miscals a losse, was Fortunes labour
To make you greater, and remove your brightnesse
Which was ill plac'd (as Diamonds coursly set)
From old *Antonius* to yong *Cæsar's* love,
A fitter sphere for those fair eys to shine in.

CLE.

Without these courtings, *Thyreus*, if great *Cæsar*
Please to embrace our friendship, we and Ægypt
Shall do him faithfull service.

THY.

Mighty Queen,

If my rude ſpeech have err'd, I humbly beg
That you would pleaſe to think it zeal in me
To do my maſter ſervice, and ſuch ſervice
As he eſteems the beſt, to gain your love,
I oft have heard him (let your Majeſty
Not be offended with that truth I utter)
Raviſh'd with fame of your perfections,
And noble ſpirit; call *Antonius* happy,
Whom fortune brought to Ægypt, to behold
That Queen, whom he ſo much deſir'd to ſee.
But when his eys beheld your portraiture
Drawn by a skilfull, and a faithfull hand;
He oft would ſay it was a likely ſeat
To hold thoſe Graces. Such perfections
Were fit for none but *Ceſar's* to admire.

CLE.

There was a *Ceſar*, lov'd me once; but I
Am not ſo proud to think it was my merit,
Though he would ſay I did deſerve farre more
Then he could utter, that great *Julius*,
Whoſe name and actions fill'd the triple world.

THY.

Though all in him were great, yet nothing greater
Then his adopting ſo divine an heire.
This *Ceſar*, Madam, for your deareſt love,
Beſides that power and greatneſſe, which the world
Both knows and fears, brings ſuch a youth and beautie
To plead for him, as in a mean eſtate
Might move a Princeſſe love: which that your eys
may better read, I here from him preſent
His true, and moſt unflatter'd portraiture.

CLE.

The faireſt form that ere theſe eys beheld.
Where all the beſt of each beſt modell meets,
Cupid's ſweet ſmiles, lodg'd in the eye of *Mars*,
Ganymed's cheek, the Imperiall brow of *Jove*

Where

Where love and majesty are proud to dwell.

THY.

His age, great Queen, is yet not thirty yeers.

CLE.

I nere till now saw beautie: but *Thyreus*
May we repose a confidence in thee
As our true friend? we will deserve thy love.

THY.

To do divinest *Cleopatra* service
Is all poor *Thyreus* pride: in serving you
I best discharge my durie to my master.

CLE.

Then briefly thus; because I would not have
Any take notice of long privacie
Twixt thee and me, and instantly w'expect
Antonius here, I will devise some means
How to deserve great *Cæsar's* love, and act
What he shall thank us for: mean while stay here
With us, good *Thyreus*, for we cannot yet
Dispatch thee with that message we entend.

THY.

I will attend your highnesse.

CLE.

Ith anone
Farewell, good *Thyreus*: but be neer about us.

Exit Thyreus.

What more then this could all the fates contrive?
What more then *Cæsars* love could I have wish'd
On which all power, all State, and Glories wait.
Ah oh the weak and fluctuating state
Of humane frailty still too much depresst
Or rais'd too much 'twixt fears and flattring hopes!
Hence base fear; a Princely confidence
Fits *Cleopatraes* minde and beautie better.

Enter ANTONIUS, CANIDIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

My dearest Lord.

AN.

Ah sweetest *Cleopatra*,
In this embrace, and this Ambrosiake kisse
I am again possest of all my wealth,
Of all my fortunes. Had the angry Gods
Purpos'd to wreak their fury fully on me
They had not left my life so sweet a comfort.

CLE.

Possest of you I stand above the reach
Of Fortunes threatning, or proud *Cæsar's* power.
Nought but your grief, and melancholly had
Power to deject my spirits.

AN.

Thy true worth
Deserves a happier friend, that could bestow
Not take alone his happinesse from thee.
In thy sweet love, and these my faithfull friends
I st I am happy, I have lost no friends.
All that are gone from me to *Cæsar's* side,
Ingratefull *Titius* and *Domitius*.
Plancius, *Silanus*, *Dellius* and *Hipparchus*,
Were Fortunes friends not mine.

CLE.

Let's in and feast,
This day we'll dedicate to mirth and freedome:
To crown your welcome hither.

AN.

Sweetly spoken.
Let not a woman teach us souldiers
To be magnanimous.

CLE.

CLE.

This feast we'll stile
The feast of fellow-dyers: for no band *Plutarch.*
No tie of friendship is so firme as that
They live in love that mean to die together. *Exeunt.*

CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, ARIUS.

CÆ.

Grave *Arius*, in thy troubled looks I read
Fear for thy native Alexandria;
But banish fear, and know thy power with *Cæsar*,
If they obey our summons, none shall die.
But though to th'utmost they resist, thy will
Shall rule our Justice.

AR.

Humble *Arius*
Is too much honour'd in great *Cæsar*'s favour.

CÆ.

We give but what we owe, a debt so great
As mine to thee can nere be overpay'd.
Great *Alexander*, whose victorious hand
Founded that City, whose eternis'd name
For ever honours it, though in great deeds
He past our glory farre, shall not exceed
Cæsar in piety: he oft would say
He ought a better being to his Master
Then to father; one meer naturall,
The other mentall, and diviner farre.
Who's that?

CLE.

Enter EPAPHRODITUS *with* FERGUS.

EPA.

Fergusius the Philosopher
Condemn'd to death by you.

Cæ.

Dispatch him then.

EPA.

He craves a word with *Arius* ere he die.

ARI.

What is it brother?

FER.

Ah good *Ariue*, *Plutarch.*
Wisemen, if truly wise, save wise men still.

ARI.

Most mighty *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

Ariue, no more,
I know what thou desir'st; *Fergusius* lives;
That thou know'st him has sav'd thee.

FER.

Victorie,
And fame still wait on *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

Let's away
And march with speed to Alexandria.

AGR.

Cæsar, your horse are weary: 'tis not fit
Too much to toil them, for I fear a sally
From Alexandria.

Cæ.

They dare not man.

AGR.

Antonius is strong in well-provided
And skilfull horsemen; and despair of favor

(Since twice you have refus'd his propoſitions)
Will put another valour into him.

Cæ.

What conqueſt can *Antonius* hope for here?

AGR.

His hopes (as nere as I conjecture them)
Are to break through your troops, and get to Sea.
For yet he has a Fleet, that may tranſport him
To other lands, to gither new ſupplyes.
But any fortune would prove higher farre
To him, then ſtaying here, without all hope
To be ſhut up in a beſieged town.
In my opinion let your march be ſlow
And gentle; that the horſe may be refreſh'd.
And we prevent the worſt.

Cæ.

Let it be ſo. *Exeunt.*

Enter LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

LU.

How formleſſe is the forme of man the ſoul,
How various ſtill how different from it ſelf?
How falſly call'd Queen of this little world?
When ſhe's a ſlave, and ſubject not alone
Unto the bodies temperature, but all
The ſtorms of Fortune.

ARI.

What occaſion
Make thee thus offer at Philoſophy?

LU.

Where haſt thou liv'd thou ſhouldſt not know th' occaſion?
The fits and changes of *Antonius*
Are theam enough: how ſtrange a loving ſoule
Is the late hater of mankinde become!

ARI.

ARI.

That is not ſtrange, he's out of breath with curſing
And now 'tis time to ſtop his mouth with kiſſing.
But what can he conceive of this ſame *Thyreus*
That holds ſuch ſecret conference with her?

LU.

He cannot chooſe but ſee it.

ARI.

Unleſſe love
Have blinded him, ſhe carries it ſo plainly.
Well, I ſhall think if there be knavery in't,
(As knavery there muſt be) that *Cleopatra*
Is not ſo ſubtle as we took her for.

LU.

He muſt be told it, if he will not ſee
Upon my life there is ſome plot of treaſon
Which yet may be diſcover'd.

ARI.

Heer they come
Let us go fetch *Antonius* if we can.

CLEOPATRA, THYREUS.

CLE.

Peluſium ſhall be rendred up to *Cæſar* *Dio.*
By our command to our Lievtenant there *Plutarch.*
Seleucus, whoſe obedience we not doubt.

THY.

Nobleſt of Queens, you make Imperiall *Cæſar*
As much a debtor to your courteſie
As he's already captive to your beauty.

CLE.

Nor do we wrong *Antonius* at all
In giving up a town which is our own.
It may be thought tis done to weaken him;

Alas,

Alas, *Antonius* is already fall'n
So low, that nothing can redeem him now
Nor make him able to conteſt with *Cæſar*.
He has not only loſt his armies ſtrength
But loſt the ſtrength of his own ſoul, and is not
That *Antony* he was when firſt I knew him.
I can do *Cæſar* now no greater ſervice.
Though I ſhall never want a heart to do it.
But we ſhall quickly ſee th' event of things;
Antonius now is deſperate, and puts
His hopes upon the fortune of one ſally,
Which will be ſuddenly perform'd, before
That thou canſt bear a meſſage back to *Cæſar*.

ANTONIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

AN.

Hands on that *Thyreus* there, to priſon with him.

THY.

To priſon!

ANT.

Yes; away with him I ſay. *Plutarch.*

THY.

Cæſar would not have us'd your meſſenger
So ill.

AN.

Thou wert no Meſſenger to me.

CLE.

For my ſake deareſt Lord.

AN.

Oh for your ſake?
I cry you mercy Lady, bear him hence. *Exit* Thyreus.
I had forgot that *Thyreus* was your ſervant.
But what ſtrange act ſhould he perform for you?

Is it to help you to a happier friend?

CLE.

Can you ſuſpect it? was my trueſt love
So ill beſtow'd? Can he, for whoſe dear ſake
A Queen ſo highly born as I preferr'd
Love before fame, and fondly did neglect
All names of honour when falſe *Fulvia*,
And proud *Octavia* had the name of wives, *Plutarch.*
Requite me thus? ungratefull *Anthony*;
For now the fury of a wronged love
Juſtly provokes my ſpeech.

ANT.

Oh *Cleopatra*,
It is not *Thyreus* but this heart of mine
That ſuffers now, deep wounded with the thought
Of thy unconſtancie: did Fortune leave
One only comfort to my wretched ſtate
And that a falſe one? for what conference
Could'ſt thou ſo oft, and in ſuch privacie
With *Cæſar*'s ſervant hold, if true to me?
Which with the rack I could enforce from him.
But that I ſcorn to do.

CLE.

You do not ſcorn
To wrong with baſe unworthy jealouſies
A faithfull heart: but if you think me falſe
Heer ſheath your ſword: make me the ſubject rather
Of manly rage then childiſh jealouſie.
It is a nobler crime, and fitter farre
For you to act, eaſier for me to ſuffer.
For live ſuſpected I nor can nor will.
The lovely Aſpe, which I with care have kept,
And was intended a preſervative
'Gainſt *Cæſar*'s cruelties, I now muſt uſe
Againſt *Antonius* baſeneſſe a worſe ſo

Then

Then *Cæsar* is: farewell, till death approve
That I was true, and you unjust in love.

ANT.

Stay *Cleopatra*, dearest Love, forgive me
Let not so small a winde have power to shake
A love so grown as ours: I did not think
That thou wert false: my heart gave no consent
To what my tongue so rashly uttered.
Nor could I have out-liv'd so sad a thought.
Let *Thyreus* be releast, and sent to *Cæsar*.

Enter CANIDIUS.

Now is the time to sally forth, my Lord,
The so tir'd with marching, and your horse
Are readie all, and wait the signall only.
The least delay loses the action.

ANT.

I come *Canidius*; dearest Love farewell.
Few houres will tell thee what *Antonius* is. *Exeunt.*

CLE.

How timorous is guilt? how are my thoughts
Distracted sadly now? on every side
My dangers grow: for should *Antonius*
Return in safety home, and know what past
'Twixt me and *Thyreus*, I have lost his heart,
And cannot choose but fear him: if he die
I am not confident of *Cæsar*'s love.
'Twas but a servants tongue I built upon.
'Tis best to make all sure: within there, *Eira*.

EIRA.

Madam!

CLE.

Are all things readie in the tombe?

EIRA.

ELI.

Yes, Madam ; *Carmio's* there and *Mardio.*

CLE.

Then thither will I go, if fate contrive
A future ſtate of happineſſe for me,
It is my caſtle: if my death they doom,
I am poſſeſt already of a tombe. *Exit.*

Actus Quintus.

ANTONIUS, LUCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

AN.

DEfeated are my troops, my fleet revolted,
The Seas and Lands are loſt; and nothing now
Is left *Antonius* but a Roman hand,
A ſword and heart to die. You trueſt ſervants,
Whoſe faith and manly conſtancie upbraids
This wicked age, and ſhall inſtruct the next,
Take from a wretched hand this legacie.
Fortune has made my will, and nought but this
Can I bequeath you. Carry it to *Ceſar*;
If he be noble, it contains enough
To make you happier then *Antonius* can.

My

My glaſſe of life and Empire now is run,
And from this hand expects a period.

LU.

My Lord, take fairer hopes.

AN.

Fie, fie, *Lucilius*;
Loſe not thy former merits in perſwading
A man, whom once thou lov'dſt to ſuch a ſhame
As to preferre a loath'd captivity
Before a noble death.
Thy looks ſpeak grief *Dio.*

Enter EROS.

Speak *Eros*, wher's the Queen?

ERO.

She's dead my Lord. *Plutarch.*
When thoſe unhappy tydings came to her
Of your defeat, ſhe ſtraight ſhut up her ſelf
Within her tombe, and dy'd.

AN.

Oh *Cleopatra*,
Why have I lingred thus, that thou a woman
Should'ſt teach ſo old a ſouldier how to die?
Fortune, I blame not thee; I have enjoy'd
What thou could'ſt give, and on the envy'd top
Of thy proud wheel have long unſhaken ſtood.
Whom Kings have ſerv'd, and Rome her ſelf obey'd;
Whom all the Zones of earths diffuſed Globe,
That know inhabitants, have known, and fear'd.
Nor is my fall ſo much degenerate.
My ſtrength no arms but Roman arms ſubdue, *Plutarch*
And none, but Monarch of the world ſucceeds.
Glutted with life and Empire now I go
Free and undaunted to the ſhades below.
Here *Eros*, take this ſword, perform the promiſe
Which thou haſt made, to kill me whenſoere

I should command: make no reply in words.

BR.

I will be true or die. Stand fair; your *Eros*
Will be your Usher to th'Elizian fields. *Kils himself.*

AN.

What hast thou done unfaithfull faithfull *Eros* *Dio.*
Too kindly cruell, falsly vertuous? *Plutarch.*
I'll trust no more, to be no more directed
By such examples: but we must be speedie.
The gates ere this time are set ope to *Cæsar.*
Fair *Cleopatra*, I am comming now
To dwell with thee, and ever to behold
Thy heavenly figure, where nor time nor death
Shall make divorce of our eternall loves.
Thus, thus I come to thee: unfaithfull sword,
I never knew thee slow in giving death
Till this sad houre, some friendly hand lend aid,
And with another wound release my soule.

Enter MARDIO.

Where is my Lord *Antonius*? Oh sad sight
The Queen enclosed in her tombe desir'd
To take her last leave of you.

AN.

Is she living?
Tis welcome news, convey me quickly, friends, *Plutarch.*
Oh quickly thither, that I may expire *Dio.*
That breath that's left in *Cleopatree's* arms. *Exunt.*

A.

AGRIPPA, GALLUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS, *Citizens.*

AGR.

Go you, *Epaphroditus*, and beſiege
The Palace, to ſurprize *Antonius*;
You *Proculeius*, and *Cornelius Gallus*,
Go preſently to *Cleopatraes* tombe,
Wo her with all your art and eloquence
With all aſſurances of *Caſar's* love
To leave that place, and yield her perſon to him.
Spare no attempts of force or policy
To draw her thence: for you the Citizens
Of Alexandria, cheer your fainting hearts,
I'll mediate in your behalf to *Cæſar*,
To ſpare the City.

CI.

Thanks to the moſt noble
And good *Agrippa*.

AGR.

Heer he comes himſelf.

Enter CÆSAR, ARIUS, TITIUS, PLANCUS.

Cæ.

The paleneſſe of your fear declares your guilt.
But that, though nere ſo great, ſhall not exceed
Our clemencie, to let you know it was
Your happineſſe to be ſubdu'd by us.
Mercy ſhall rule our juſt ſeveritie.
First for your founder *Alexanders* ſake, *Plutarch.*
Next for the love of reverent *Arius* *Dio.*
Our Maſter heer: whoſe goodneſſe far out-weighs

All

All your offences and rebellions.

CIT.

Cæsar in goodneſſe, as in greatneſſe, bears
Equalitie with *Jove*.

Enter ACHOREUS.

ACHO.

Hail mighty *Cæsar*.

Cæ.

What's he?

ARI.

Achoreus, *Osiris* Prieſt,
A good and holy man.

Cæ.

We dare believe thee,
And therfore welcom him.

ACHO.

Pleaſe it great *Cæsar*,
To give *Achoreus* leave to wait on him
Into the ancient Temples of our Gods
To ſhew th' Ægyptian rites and myſteries,
And all the Deities that we adore.

Cæ.

Moſt willingly *Achoreus*, I would ſee
Gods, but not Oxen.

TI.

He has blank'd the Prieſt.

Cæ.

I fain would ſee great *Alexander's* herſe
The manſion once of ſo divine a ſoul
A ſpirit greater then the world it ſelf,
Whom the world fear'd but could not ſatisfie.

ACH.

Within the vault of our Pyramides

His

His bodie yet all whole may *Cæsar* see.
And all the bodies of our *Ptolomeys*.

Cæ.

I'd see Kings only, not dead carcasses. *Sueton.*
But see, *Epaphroditus* is return'd. *Dio.*

Enter EPAPHRODITUS, LVCILIUS, ARISTOCRATES.

Cæ.

Speak man, where is *Antonius*?

EP.

Slain, my Lord.

Cæ.

How? slain? what hand durst do it?

EPA.

His own hand.

Cæ.

That was our fear: cruell *Antonius*.
Too cruell to thy self, to Rome, and me
How white a day have all the people lost?
How great might *Cæsar*'s happinesse have been
Had but the fates permitted me to lay
These conquering arms aside, and once again
Embrace thee, dear *Antonius*, as a friend
Thou worthy aider of my infant fortunes, *Plutarch.*
Thou brave revenger of great *Julius* death,
Witnesse these tears, though I were forc'd to warre
Whilst thou preferring forreigne love before
Cæsar's alliance, did'st reject my kindred,
And scorn my love) I still could honour thee.
But since too cruell fate denies to me
So great an happinesse as to expresse
This love to thee alive, let thy dear ghost
Behold my Pietie, and see the honours

Cæsar

Cæsar will do to thy sad funerall.

LU.

Most royall *Cæsar*-like dissimulation.

ARI.

I hope how ere 'twill serve our turns *Lucilius*.
Now is the fittest time.

Cæ.

What men are these?

EPAP.

Two of *Antonius* truest servants, *Cæsar*,
Who bring a letter from their dying Lord.

Cæ.

Let me peruse it well, it shall be granted.
Your lives and fortunes both are safe, and since
We ever lov'd fidelitie, you shall
If so you like, be welcome to our service,

LU.

'Tis our desire; our lives and fortunes ever
Shall do great *Cæsar* true and faithfull service
As they before did to *Antonius*.

Cæ.

Where did he die?

EPA.

In *Cleopatraes* arms
By her with ropes let up into the tombe,
After his deadly wound.

Cæ.

Is she there still?

Enter GALLUS.

Now I shall know; speak *Gallus*, what's the news?

GAL.

We came and call'd at *Cleopatraes* tombe,
Who from above made answer, and deny'd

To yield herſelf, but upon *Cæſar's* word.
When I with beſt perſuaſions ſtrove to winne her,
And held her talk awhile, whilſt *Proculeius*
On tother ſide the tombe eſpy'd a place
That open ſtood, by which the Queen receiv'd
Dying *Antonius*, which he ſcaling enter'd
Behinde the Queen: but had he not been ſpeedy
She there had ſlain herſelf: a maid of hers
Spy'd *Proculeius* entring, and aloud
Cry'd out oh Queen thou art ſurpriz'd alive.
She drawing a ſhort poniard was reſtrain'd
By *Proculeius*, who both held her hand
And ſpake her fair; at laſt obtain'd ſo much
By ſtrong perſuaſions of your clemencie
He drew her thence, and got her to the Palace.
Where now ſhe is, and *Proculeius* ſtays.
But her deſire is ſtill to ſpeak with you,
Till when from us ſhe will admit no comfort.

Cæ.

We will in perſon preſently go ſee her.
Protect me *Pallas* 'gainſt falſe *Venus* charms. *Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA *in mourning.*

Known miſchiefs have their cure; but doubts have (none,
And better is deſpair then fruitleſſe hope
Mixt with a killing fear: my thoughts are now
More black and balefull then this ſad attire.
If *Cæſar* come, I do not fear his chiding
I have a certain Antidote 'gainſt that.
'Tis not his anger, but his love afflicts
My doubting ſoul, whether that love will prove
Fained or true, yet may ſtraight apppear.

He's

He's not ſo old, nor I ſo ignorant
But that his actions, geſtures, words, and looks
Will make his heart lie open to my view.

Enter CÆSAR, *and* EPAPHRODITUS.

CÆ.

How ſweet a ſorrow dwels upon that brow!
How would ſhe look in ſmiling dalliance?
Oh pardon me thou powerfull God of love,
That durſt preſume to tempt thy Deitie.
Forgive my confidence. I now excuſe
Antonius weakneſſe, but ſtay there my heart,
My vertuous *Livia* is more fair then ſhe,

CLE.

Hail mighty Prince; for that high name the Gods. *Dio.*
Who reft me of it, have beſtow'd on thee. *Plutarch.*

CÆ.

Riſe *Cleopatra*, *Cæſar's* victory
Takes nought from you.

CLE.

Oh let me never riſe
Till *Cæſar* grant my ſuit.

CÆ.

Good Queen ſtand up,
And freely ſpeak what you deſire:

CLE.

I beg
A boon but ſmall, which *Cæſar* nere deni'd
His greateſt enemies.

CÆ.

And can you think
I ſhould deny it you? Do but expreſſe it;

CLE.

CLE.

That thou would'ſt kill me *Cæſar*; I have liv'd
Theſe many yeers too long: I ſhould have dy'd *Dio.*
When that great Worthy, that renowmed *Cæſar*
Was baſely murther'd in Romes Capitoll.
Surviving him was my unhappineſſe.
But I have liv'd to ſee his ſonne inherit *Dio.*
His ſtate and Empire, and controll the world.

Cæ.

Be cheery *Cleopatra*, fear no wrong
At *Cæſar's* hands.

CLE.

Death is no wrong at all.
I have deſerv'd it, Sir.

Cæ.

But can you think
That we, whoſe clemencie ſo many men
And ſtubborn enemies ſo oft have prov'd,
Should now at laſt be cruell to a Queen?
But we muſt chide you, that ſo long together
Have ſided with *Antonius*, and with him
Conſpir'd the wrack of Rome.

CLE.

That's ſoon excus'd.
If 'twere a crime to love *Antonius* *Dio.*
(Which I confeſſe I did, and his large favours *Plutarch.*
Truly deſerv'd it) think it was not mine
But fates own crime, that firſt allotted me
To his protection: had your ſhare of rule
In Egypt lyen, I had been *Cæſars* friend.

Cæ.

Beſides with men and money you give aid
To *Caius Caſſius* in Philippi field
Who murther'd *Cæſar* in the Capitoll.

CLE.

CLE.

Cæsar, as false as truth it self is true.
I was accused to *Antonius* *Plutarch.*
For that before; but in Cilicia *Appian.*
I quickly cleer'd those causeless jealousies,
Witnesse thou glorious starre, which the great soule
Of noble *Julius*, when he left the earth,
Added to heaven, how innocent I am
From any fault in that: but *Cæsar* know *Dio.*
Against thy father not the act alone,
But even suspition shall be purg'd with death.
I can no longer live.

Cæ.

What have I done?
I fear my rashnesse has too far betray'd *Dio.*
My thoughts to *Cleopatra*: gentle Queen
Be comforted; expect at *Cæsar's* hand
Nothing but love and friendship: do not wrong
My goodnesse with unjust suspition
All former grievances are quite forgot.
Your port and state shall be maintain'd at full.
Your houshold servants not diminished.
Epaphroditus, see the Queen attended
As fits her state and honour; and till next
We visit you, rest with a full assurance
Of our best love and friendship.

CLE.

All the payment
That my poor fortunes can return to *Cæsar*
Is thanks and service.

Cæ.

Epaphroditus.

EPAP.

Cæsar. *they whisper.*

CLE.

CLE.

Yes. whisper on; you cannot over-reach
My jealousies: no signes of love at all, *Exit Cæsar.*
No smile, nor amorous glance, I was deceiv'd,
And meerly coosen'd by base *Thyreus.*
But I must hide my fears, and cleer this brow
The better to effect my purposes.

EPA.

How fares your Majesty?

CLE.

Never so well
As now I am, I did not think great *Cæsar*
Had been so full of love and courtesie.

EPA.

Oh Madam, *Cæsar's* th' unexampled mirrour
Of royaltie, and does as far exceed
All petie Kings in goodnesse as in power.
And if my humblest services in ought
May give content to royall *Cleopatra*
I shall be proud to be commanded still.

CLE.

Thanks good *Epaphroditus.*
That love is true that's shew'd in misery.
But what have I forgot? I had a note
Of some particulars I meant to give
To *Cæsar's* hand and quite forgot it here.
Nor would I trust the cariage of a thing
Of so great consequence to every hand.

EPA.

Will you command my service?

CLE.

I shall rest
Indebted to your love; *Cæsar* will thank you.
So much concerns both his estate and mine.

Be ſpeedy good *Epaphroditus*, for
I long to heare his anſwer.

EPA.

Fear not Madam.
A quick performance, it rejoyces me
To ſee her look ſo cheerily again. *Exit Epa.*

CLE.

So now my trouble is remov'd, I come,
I come my deareſt Lord *Antonius*,
Never till now thy true and faithfull love.
My much abuſed Lord, do not diſdain
Or bluſh t'acknowlege *Cleopatra's* name
When tears and bloud have waſh'd her ſpotted ſoul.
Wert thou alive again, not all the world
Should ſhake my conſtancie, or make divorce
Twixt thee and mee: but ſince too late, alas,
My tears of ſorrow come, I'll follow thee,
And beg thy pardon in the other world.
All crimes are there for evermore forgot.
There *Ariadne* pardons *Theſeus* falſhood.
Dido forgives the perjur'd Prince of Troy,
And *Troilus* repentant *Creſſida*.
Though falſe to thee alive, I now am come
A faithfull lover of thy duſt and tombe. *Exit.*

Enter AGRIPPA, GALLUS, *and two* Pſyls.

GAL.

Marcus Agrippa, I have here provided
As *Ceſar* gave in charge two Libyan *Pſyls*.
All Afrik yields not fitter for his purpoſe.

AGRI.

They look like likely ones.

GAL.

GAL.

They have been prov'd,
And have already on my ſouldiers,
When they were bit by Serpents, done ſtrange cures,
Paſt all belief or hope, recall'd fled life
Back to his manſion, and beyond the power
Of *Æſculapius* have ſuck'd and charm'd
The mortall venome from their dying limbs.
Theſe two, *Agrippa* in their infancy
Their doubting ſires to try their lawfull births *Plinius.*
(As Eagles try their Eaglets 'gainſt the Sun) *Solinus.*
Expos'd to mortall Serpents, and were ſo *Lucanus.*
Confirm'd in what they ſought, the trembling Snakes
Durſt not aſſault the Infants.

Enter CÆSAR.

AG.

Here he comes.

Cæ.

Are thoſe the men?

GAL.

Yet, *Ceſar.*

Cæ.

Carry them
To *Cleopatraes* Palace; let them wait
Neer to *Epaphroditus.* What's the news?
How fares the Queen?

EPA.

Never more cheery Sir.
Her looks expreſſe her hopes; nor in her words
Can ſhe conceal her inward cheerfulneſſe.
But one thing, Sir, ſhe ſai'd ſhe had forgot,
Which neerly did concern both you and her;
And that in ſuch a cauſe ſhe durſt not truſt
A common meſſenger, requeſting me
To give it to your hands.

Cx.

She has deceiv'd thee,
And all of us; the worſt that I could fear
Is come to paſſe: oh run *Epaphroditus*,
I'll follow thee with all the ſpeed I can.
But all too late, I fear, our ſpeed will come. *Exeunt.*

Enter CLEOPATRA *crown'd, attended by* GLAUCUS, MARDIO, EIRA, CHARMIO, *ſhee takes her ſtate.* ANTHONY'S *Herſe brought in.*

CLE.

This is my ſecond Coronation day;
But nobler then the firſt, and fuller farre
Of reall honour, and magnificence.
Nor till this pompous houre was *Cleopatra*
A perfect Queen, alas, I did not ſway
A Scepter over fortune, or command
As now I do, the deſtinies themſelves.
I wore a painted honour, a meer ſhadow
Of Royall ſtate, and ſuch a feeble Crown
As warre could threaten, treaſon undermine,
And every puffe of Fortune blow it off.
My ſtate is conſtant now, my thoughts above
The fear of dangers or oppoſing foes.

MAR.

What new addition has ſhe got off ſtate?

GLA.

I cannot tell, nor can I gueſſe her meaning.

CLE.

Glaucus and *Mardio*, leave the room a while.

Exeunt Glaucus *and* Mardio.

Come hither Girles, I will no longer hide
My joys from you; in ſuch attire as this
I go to meet my dear *Antonius*.

CHAR

CHAR.

Madam, he's dead.

CLE.

Alas, thou art deceiv'd.
He lives my *Charmio* in the other world,
And ſtays for me; I have been too too ſlack
In comming to him: this that here lies dead
Was but the houſe that lodg'd my deareſt Lord,
That earthly Manſion, that did once contain
The kindeſt, nobleſt, and the trueſt ſoule
That ever liv'd; and this our ſecond meeting
Is farre more ſweet, and full of noble love
Then when we firſt met in Cilicia,
When our magnificence and pomp did fill
The world with wonder and aſtoniſhment.
Why weep you girles? is it to ſee your Miſtris
Greater then ere in Glory? if you lov'd me,
You'd weep to ſee great *Cleopatra* led
A wretch'd captive through the ſtreets of Rome
Before proud *Cæſar*'s chariot, mock'd and ſlowted,
And from a Queen become *Octavian* drudge.
No, no my girles, I will be ſtill my ſelf
And from this ſeat of ſtate look down in ſcorn
On Rome, and *Cæſar*'s threats as things below me.

EI.

Nor heer ſhall my attendance leave you, Madam,
I'll wait upon you to th'Eliſian ſhades.

CHAR.

Nor will poor *Charmio* be left behinde.

CLE.

My earthly race is run, and I deſcend
As great a ghoſt as *Theban Semele*,
When her ambitious love had ſought and met
The Thunderers embraces, when no Pile
Of earthly wood, but *Jove*'s celeſtiall fire
Conſum'd her beauties reliques, and ſent down

Her soul from that Majestick funerall.
Farewell thou fading remnant of my Love.
When I am gone, I'll leave these earthly parts
To keep thee company: never to part,
But dwell together, and dissolve together.
Come Aspe, possesse thy mansion; freely feed
On these two hils, upon whose snowy tops
The winged *Cupid* oft has taken stand,
And shot from thence the proudest hearts on earth.
Corruption now, and rottennesse must seize
This once admired fabrick, and dissolve
This flesh to common elements again:
When skilfull nature, were she strictly bound
To search through all her store-house would be pos'd
To tell which piece was *Cleopatra* once.
Sweet Aspe, I feel thy touch, and life begins
[illegible] these cold limbs to take her gentle light.
A slumber seizes me, farewell my girles.
Thus let the Romans finde me dead, and know
Maugre the power of Rome, and *Cæsar's* spleen,
That *Cleopatra* liv'd, and di'd a Queen.

CHAR.

She's dead, and *Eira* too. I heare a noise.
There is no dallying now; I must be speedy,
And use the common and sure way to death.

She stabs her self.

Enter

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, TITIUS, PLANCUS, GALLUS, EPAPHRODITUS, PROCULEIUS.

Cæ.

We come too late, and all in vain I fear
Our care has been.

EPA.

Here lies her ſervant bleeding,
Not dead: ſpeak *Charmio*, how dy'd the Queen?

CHAR.

A death that well beſeem'd her royall birth. *dyes.*

AGR.

See *Cæſar*, ſee; the mark upon her breſt,
And here the fatall authour.

Cæ.

'Twas the Aſpe. [*Suetan.*
Be ſpeedie now, and uſe your utmoſt power *Dio.*
You skilfull *Pſylls*, call back this royall ſoul
To her fair ſeat, and take from *Cæſar's* bounty
Above your wiſh: ſuck thou the wounded place,
And mutter thou thy ſtrongeſt charms to fright
Pale death from thence, and you infernall Gods,
If ere to humane prayers you could lend
An exorable eare, 'tis *Cæſar* begs,
Cæſar, whoſe ſword has ſent to your black ſhades
A hundred thouſand ſouls, and ſtill has power
T'enlarge your Empire, begs in lieu of all
But reſtitution of one ſoul alone.

TI.

How royally ſhe dy'd?

PLA.

So conquer'd Prince.
Did ever finde a nobler way to death.

Had

Had feeble *Perseus* known so brave a course,
He had redeem'd his captive life from shame.
And not depriv'd the Conquerour of fame.

Cæ.

Is there no hope?

PSY.

She's gone past all recoverie.

Cæ.

We will no longer strive 'gainst destiny.
Though thou art dead, yet live renown'd for ever
And let this action speak thee to the world
A so not shaming *Cæsar's* victory.
No other Crown or Scepter after thine
Shall Ægypt honour: thou shalt be the last
Of all the raigning race of *Ptolomey*:
And all, and more then what thy letter crav'd
Will *Cæsar* grant with dead *Antonius*
In richer state then ere proud *Memphis* saw. *Suetan.*
Her Kings inter'd shall *Cleopatra* lye. *Dio.*
Thy dying figure carv'd in fairest stone *Plutarch.*
Shall my triumphant chariot wear, for all
To gaze and wonder at thy form and worth.
Ægypt no more a Kingdome, now a Province
Cornelius Gallus, is thy government.
And here let *Cæsar* sheath the civill sword,
Whose fatall edge these twenty years has ripp'd
The bleeding entrails of afflicted Rome.
Heer let our labours end: advance brave friends
Our prosperous Eagles home to Italy,
To reap the fruit of all our wars and toils,
And fill great Rome with conquer'd Ægypts sp

FINIS.